

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



The Rhetoric of Female Self-Destruction:
A Study in Homer, Euripides, and Ovid

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Sheila M. Flaherty

November, 1994

UMI Number: 9522657

Copyright 1995 by
Flaherty, Sheila M.
All rights reserved.

UMI Microform Edition 9522657
Copyright 1995, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

ABSTRACT
The Rhetoric of Female Self-Destruction:
A Study in Homer, Euripides, and Ovid
Sheila M. Flaherty
Yale University
1994

Female self-destruction is a persistent trope in the western literary tradition. This dissertation explores the origins of the trope in ancient Greek and Roman poetry, focusing on a heroine's statement of her wish to die. This type of utterance is referred to as the rhetoric of female self-destruction.

The three ancient poets in whose work the rhetoric of female self-destruction is most notable are Homer, Euripides, and Ovid. The dissertation begins with a study of Homer's depiction of Helen in the *Iliad*: each time Helen appears in the poem, she wishes for death. Helen's discourse is comparable to the misogynous sentiments expressed by Hesiod, Semonides, and Hipponax. The similarity between Helen's self-abuse and the archaic poets' abuse of women generally suggests that the cultural prejudice against women is ultimately the source of the literary tradition of heroines who wish to die.

In Euripides the rhetoric of self-sacrifice is depicted as a primarily feminine discourse. The heroines of the *Alcestis*, *Heraclidae*, *Hecuba*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, all consent to die. In part two of the dissertation, each of these plays is looked at in turn, and it is argued that,

contrary to popular assumption, the plays suggest that self-sacrifice is not a natural female urge, but rather a male fantasy of female discourse and behavior.

The third part of the dissertation is a study of Ovid's *Heroides* 1-15. Written as a set of letters from abandoned heroines to their male lovers, the *Heroides* features the rhetoric of female self-destruction as a prominent and unifying motif. Almost all of the heroines either wish they were dead or threaten to kill themselves. It is argued that the *Heroides* does not suggest that women by some natural weakness of character wish to die, but that men respond positively, even erotically, to women wishing to die.

In conclusion, several texts from European literature are examined (including Boccaccio's *Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*, and *The Portuguese Letters*) as evidence that the rhetoric of female self-destruction is an ongoing literary tradition.

(c) Copyright by Sheila M. Flaherty 1995
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Contents

Acknowledgments	page	iv
Introduction		1
Part One		
Homer: Helen's Death-Wishes in the <i>Iliad</i>		7
Part Two		
Euripides: The Rhetoric of Self-Sacrifice		37
<i>Alcestis</i>		40
<i>Heraclidae</i>		66
<i>Hecuba</i>		84
<i>Iphigenia at Aulis</i>		107
Part Three		
Before the <i>Heroides</i> :		
The Male Love Poet's "Death"		126
Ovid: Death-Wishes in the <i>Heroides</i>		149
Conclusion: The <i>Remedia Amoris</i> and Beyond		200
Bibliography		225

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Victor Bers of Yale University, and Justina Gregory of Smith College, for reading portions of my work on Euripides. I have had the pleasure also of working with Gordon Williams, Chair of the Classics Department throughout my time at Yale. He has made many direct contributions to the accuracy and argument of this thesis.

Three years ago, Patricia Rosenmeyer listened with interest to the first formulation of my idea for this thesis in the stairwell of Phelps Hall; as my adviser, she has nurtured both its development and my own in numberless ways. I am grateful to her for all that she has taught me about classics, literature, and language, and for the opportunity to engage with her supple mind.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the help of friends and colleagues: Heather Harwood, for reading Part One on Helen, and Angela Fritsen and Vered Kenaan, both of whom read portions of Part Three on Ovid. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the debt I owe to my colleague in the Yale English Department, and now my fiancé, Gregory Jones. He is an avid, at times irascible, promoter of the classics, feminism, and good writing. I am deeply grateful to him for encouraging me to express my ideas in their present form.

Introduction

"It just goes on and on. Last year the woman who lives two doors down from me tried to commit suicide. Nick said women are unstable, but I know she did it because that was the only way she could control her husband. He's an awful runaround, and he's not nice to Joan."

*The Women's Room*¹

The Women's Room, by Marilyn French, was an immediate bestseller when it was published in 1977; reprinted in 1993, it is now considered a feminist classic. Its immediate subject is the condition of women, suburban housewives in particular, in the 1960's and 70's; it explores women's work, women's rage, and their relationships with men and other women. Female suicide is not a major theme in the book. This excerpt, however, raises a question that is central to my thesis: how do we interpret a woman's apparent wish for death?

The speaker, Samantha, and her husband, Nick, offer conflicting interpretations of a neighbor's attempted suicide. Nick explains Joan's act of self-destruction as a function simply of gender: he believes that instability is a characteristic feature of all women. Samantha, meanwhile,

¹Marilyn French, *The Women's Room* [1977] (NY: Ballantine Books, rpt. 1993) 184. The 1993 edition contains a new introduction by the author and an afterword by Susan Faludi.

implies that Nick is no authority on this matter; his answer represents a stock male response to women. While regarding Nick as superficial and glib in his understanding of women, the speaker depicts herself as savvy and sympathetic: "Nick said women are unstable, *but I know....*" She seems to "know" why Joan tried to kill herself because she, as a woman living on the same street, both is sympathetic with other wives, and has intimate knowledge of her neighbor's personal problems. She rejects Nick's argument that women are by nature unstable, and offers instead an explanation of Joan's suicide attempt in terms of gender relations: her suicidal act is a strategy of controlling an unfaithful husband. Samantha clearly pities Joan, and despises Joan's disloyal husband ("an awful runaround"), implying that there is no end to women's problems with men ("It just goes on and on.").

This passage underscores the difficulty of interpreting an act of self-destruction. Does such an act indicate emotional instability, and thus a lack of control, or is it the ultimate act of control and emotional manipulation? Nick and his wife disagree in their interpretation of the suicide attempt: does their disagreement represent a gender difference, suggesting, for instance, that while men see female self-destruction as a sign of emotional instability, women regard it--and use it--as a strategy of control in an erotic situation?

I have deliberately extracted this passage from a work of fiction as opposed to a study in psychology or sociology² in order to highlight a central point in my thesis: female self-destruction is a persistent trope in the western literary tradition. From ancient Greek epic to recent women's liberation fiction, the convention of female self-destruction "just goes on and on." In ancient literature and mythology, examples of female suicides far outweigh male acts of self-destruction: Jocasta, Eurydice, Evadne, Deianira, Phaedra, Dido, and Lucretia, are just a few. In his study *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity*, Anton J.L. van Hooff compares the number of male and female suicides in ancient mythology:

Women are strikingly well represented in the mythical material: there are seventy-one cases of female suicide against fifty-one male ones....That sex ratio is not a reflection of reality. It is more a case that myth is the medium through which the more problematical nature of female existence is handled....The life of a man is less problematic; that is the reason why male suicide is less represented in mythology.³

I do not necessarily agree with van Hooff's explanation of the disproportionate number of female suicides to male in mythology. But the evidence he has compiled regarding male

²There is, of course, abundant research on suicide in the social sciences. See, for example, Jean Baechler, *Suicides*, tr. Barry Cooper (NY: Basic Books, 1979). On the interpretation of female suicidal acts, Baechler writes, "Typically female roles include attempted suicide as a possible strategy. As daughters, wives, and mistresses, and conforming to the dependence which nature [!] and culture encourage, women have a greater tendency to reach their ends by the threat of trying to kill themselves" (291). I reject the argument from "nature," and will emphasize the role of literature and other cultural influences in establishing the rhetorical strategies available to women.

³Anton J.L. van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity* (London and NY: Routledge, 1990) 21.

and female suicide in antiquity is compelling and useful.

Van Hooff's research takes him to a wide range of sources, fiction and non-fiction alike. His objective is to survey the many types of self-destruction in antiquity, not to study in detail any one particular manifestation. My aim, on the other hand, is to examine the creation and development of the self-destructive heroine as a character type in Greek and Roman literature. With so many examples of self-destructive heroines in the surviving literary sources, I have chosen to focus on a particular manifestation of female self-destruction: not the act of self-destruction itself, but rather a heroine's statement of her wish to die. I will refer to this type of utterance as the rhetoric of female self-destruction.

The rhetoric of self-destruction is marked in ancient texts as a largely feminine discourse. Yet the poets in antiquity were usually men. Thus the rhetoric of female self-destruction is a literary discourse represented by *male citizens*, the dominant group in ancient society, not as a discourse of their own, but of *women*, a non-citizen group under the legal control of men. I would like to explore the way in which the literary discourse of female self-destruction reflects the political condition of women in Greek and Roman society.

The convention first emerges in the *Iliad*: each time Helen appears, she wishes for death. No Homeric hero ever utters a comparable wish. As a mode of discourse in the

Iliad, the death-wish belongs strictly to Helen. Likewise, in Euripides the rhetoric of self-sacrifice is depicted as primarily a feminine discourse. The heroines of the *Alcestis*, *Heraclidae*, *Hecuba*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, all consent--to husband, father, soothsayer, or enemy army--to die. Only once, in the *Phoenician Women*, does a male hero (Menoceus) offer himself in an act of self-sacrifice. The same imbalance is reflected in Ovid's *Heroides* 1-15: written as letters from abandoned heroines to their male lovers, the *Heroides* features the rhetoric of self-destruction as a prominent and unifying motif. Almost all of the heroines either wish they were dead or threaten to kill themselves. The rhetoric of self-destruction ceases to be a major feature in the sequel, *Heroides* 16-21, which contains love letters written by the heroes Paris, Acontius, and Leander. Thus, throughout antiquity, from Homer to Ovid, we can observe a strong literary association between self-destruction and the feminine.

I will therefore argue that, as a literary convention, the rhetoric of female self-destruction originates in the *Iliad*, and is developed in the sacrifice-plays of Euripides and Ovid's *Heroides*. Additionally, I will suggest that this literary trope both reflects and influences western culture's conception of female nature and female discourse. The responses that we see in conflict in *The Women's Room* are representative of attitudes that are traditional in western culture: women are sometimes perceived as unstable and, as a

result, suicidal, while at other times are thought to use self-destructive acts as a strategy of erotic manipulation.

It has become customary to judge Euripides and Ovid as the two ancient poets most sensitive to and appreciative of female nature. For instance, L.P. Wilkinson claims that Euripides, "like Ovid, had tended to see things from the woman's point of view."⁴ Sarah Mack likewise boasts of Ovid's insight into women: "Nowhere in literature are there more penetrating studies of female psychology" than in Ovid. "In the ancient world," she adds, "only Euripides can match Ovid in his interest and knowledge of women."⁵ It seems to me, however, that Euripides and Ovid were originally popularized by male audiences; what this suggests is that Euripides and Ovid are talented at depicting women *as they are perceived* or *as they are desired by men*. This idea will be fully explored below. I will argue that the sacrifice-plays of Euripides do not support the idea that self-sacrifice is a natural female urge, but that it is, rather, a *male fantasy* of female behavior. Likewise, the *Heroides* does not suggest that women by some natural weakness of character wish to die, but that men respond positively, even erotically, to women wishing to die. My approach is new principally because it resists at every point the moral and erotic attraction that our culture encourages us to feel for self-destructive heroines.

⁴L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Surveyed* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1962) 34.

⁵Sarah Mack, *Ovid* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1988) 3.

Part One

Homer: Helen's Death-Wishes in the *Iliad*

I begin with Helen as she appears in the *Iliad* because her portrait there serves as a model for the later depiction of certain heroines in the Greek and Roman literary tradition: the wish to die, first uttered by Helen in the *Iliad*, is repeated by heroines throughout western literature. Sitting on the Trojan walls with Priam, for example, Helen wishes that death had "pleased" her when she eloped with Paris (*Iliad* 3.173-75):

“ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἀδεῖν κακὸς ὀππότε δεῦρο
υἱεῖ σὺν ἐπόμην, θάλαμον γνωτοῦς τε λιποῦσα
παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν.”¹

"If only terrible death had pleased me when I followed your son here, abandoning my bedchamber, my relatives, my young daughter, and friends my own age."

The remorse and self-hate evident in these words are characteristic of Helen as she is portrayed in the *Iliad*. In fact, she wishes for death every time she speaks in the poem. In this chapter, I will examine each of Helen's three death-wishes (*Il.* 3.173-75, 6.345-48, 24.764).

At the outset, I reject the essentialist view of women as expounded, for instance, by Aristotle (and by many

¹Text used is David B. Monro and Thomas W. Allen, eds. *Homeric Opera*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, rpt. 1976-78). Translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

theorists after him) that "woman is...more easily moved to tears,...more querelous, more apt to scold and to strike [i.e. than man is]. She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of shame, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory" (*Historia Animalium* 608b7-14; emphasis mine).² My study proceeds from a different assumption: I think that women are not "by nature" prone to despair; we do not "naturally" wish to die. I thus propose to explore the invention of the heroine who wishes for death as a female character type in the Greek and Roman literary tradition, beginning with the first such female character, Helen in the *Iliad*.

Helen's wish for death is often read as the sign of a fine and noble character.³ For instance, W.E. Gladstone, the late nineteenth-century Homeric scholar and Liberal Prime Minister of England, regards Helen's wish for death as both reassuring and virtuous:

...to the world, beneath whose standard of morality she has sunk, she makes at least this reparation, that the sharp condemnation of herself is ever in her mouth

²Translated by d'A.W. Thompson, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol.1, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984) 949.

³In Calhoun's discussion of ethics in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, "Helen's remorse" is adduced as an example of "Homeric manners" (and is coupled, interestingly, with "Penelope's faithfulness"); see George M. Calhoun, "Polity and Society: The Homeric Picture," *A Companion to Homer*, eds. Alan J.B. Wace and Frank H. Stubbings (NY: The Macmillan Co., 1963), 451. For a lyrical essay focused on the character of Helen in the *Iliad*, see Rachel Bessaloff, "Helen," trans. Mary McCarthy, *Homer: A Collection of Critical Essays*, G. Steiner and R. Fagles, eds. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), 100-104. The essay highlights Helen's penitence and majesty: "Shrouded in her long white veils, Helen walks across the *Iliad* like a penitent; misfortune and beauty are consummate in her and lend majesty to her step."

...her self-abasing and self-renouncing humility come nearer, perhaps, than any other heathen example, to the type of Christian penitence.⁴

But, in fact, the world depicted in the *Iliad* seems *not* to expect reparation (or reassurance) from Helen, nor to look upon her as a fallen--or "sunken"--woman. On the contrary, Priam treats Helen with fatherly affection; Hector is brotherly in his devotion to protect her; and, even though their "marriage" has been the cause of so much suffering, Helen's Trojan husband Paris, in the third book of the poem, claims to feel more attracted to her than ever before.

There is a discrepancy between Gladstone, who expects reparation from Helen, and the Homeric heroes, who appear to accept her unconditionally. This problem might be resolved if we consider the nineteenth-century critic's "moral world," and his apparent yearning to translate the "heathen" poem into his own Christian terms.⁵ Gladstone's reading explicitly declares its bias in an anachronistic comparison between Helen and a Christian penitent; certainly no Homeric

⁴William Ewart Gladstone, *Juventus Mundi: The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1869), 513. Of Homeric scholarship in Victorian England in general and Gladstone in particular, Stuart Gillespie writes, "One striking feature of the Victorian engagement with Homer is the number of men in public life who worked and wrote on him--...most famously Gladstone," in *The Poets on the Classics: An Anthology of English Poets' Writings on the Classical Poets and Dramatists from Chaucer to the Present* (London and NY: Routledge, 1988), 97.

⁵Gladstone is representative of the tendency among Victorian scholars to regard Greek epic "as a commentary on the present and as a mirror of their own particular interests or philosophies of life"; the Homeric view of the world was frequently interpreted as "almost Christian": see Donald M. Foerster, *The Fortunes of Epic Poetry: A Study in English and American Criticism, 1750-1950* (N.p.: Catholic University of America Press, 1962) 124-129.

character ever congratulates Helen for abusing herself the way he does.

Yet Gladstone's view of Helen as a wrong-doer is in fact supported by Helen herself, and the death-wishes that she repeatedly utters point to a problem that never goes away: the discrepancy in the *Iliad* between Helen's view of herself and the Trojans' treatment of her. Three times in the poem Helen maligns herself and wishes to have died, but she is the only character in the *Iliad* (or the *Odyssey* ⁶) who voices this sentiment. All other characters in the *Iliad* are either silent about Helen or exhibit affection for her. If everyone in Troy treats Helen with such kindness, then why is Helen unhappy? *Why must she always wish for death?*

The apparent discrepancy of opinion, I will argue, is partly a function of the poem's economy: the heroes in the poem treat Helen with such affection that, as a result, the task of reviling Helen falls to Helen herself. I will show, though, that the language with which Helen abuses herself is similar to some of the misogynous expressions found in the poetry of Hesiod, Semonides, and Hipponax. It is conventional in archaic Greek poetry to blame women categorically for human suffering and to idealize the notion of a world without women.⁷ I suggest that Helen's wishes for

⁶Despite the long years spent suffering because of Helen's elopement to Troy, Penelope nevertheless exonerates her in the *Odyssey*, maintaining that a god drove Helen to the "foul act" of sleeping in another man's bed (*Od.*23.218-24).

⁷For the phrase "a world without women" see Marilyn B. Arthur, "The Dream of a World without Women: Poetics and the Circles of Order in the *Theogony Prooemium*," *Arethusa* 16 (1983) 97-116.

her own death in the *Iliad* and the misogynous expressions common in archaic Greek poetry are in some way correlative utterances.

Helen's first death-wish occurs in the scene from the third book of the *Iliad* that is commonly referred to as the *teichoskopia*: "the view from the walls" (*Il.3.146ff.*). The title *teichoskopia* refers to the view from their walls that the Trojans have of the Greek heroes on the plain beneath them. Helen eventually sits on the walls with the Trojan elders, watching and naming the Greek men for her Trojan father-in-law, Priam. But first, before taking her seat among them, Helen is herself the object of their gaze. She enters this scene in silence, veiled in "shimmering garments." Aside from her veils, however, no other detail of her appearance is described in the narrator's voice. Our view of Helen is instead channeled through the gaze of the Trojan elders as they watch her approach. Helen is the silent spectacle in this scene, while the old men sit on the walls, looking at her and speaking among themselves (*Il.3.150-52*):

γήραι δὴ πολέμοιο πεπανμένοι, ἀλλ' ἀγορηταὶ
ἔσθλοί, τεττίγεσσιν ἑοικότες, οἳ τε καθ' ὕλην
δενδρέῳ ἐφεζόμενοι ὄπα λειριόεσσαν ἰεῖσι.

They had stopped fighting because of old age, but they were excellent speakers, like the cicadas that sit upon a tree in the forest, projecting an ethereal voice.

The comparison with the song of the cicadas implies that the Trojan elders' voices are eloquent and always present in the background, a natural buzzing that one hears and takes for granted.⁸ The image thus establishes the sound of the elders' voices as the natural background of this scene and perhaps even of the poem as a whole. Their remarks about Helen thus in some sense serve as an index to the poem's attitude toward her.

As they look upon Helen, the old men sympathize with the Greek and Trojan warriors who are willing to fight for her; she is, indeed, a great beauty (*Il.3.154-60*):

οἱ δ' ὡς οὖν εἶδονθ' Ἑλένην ἐπὶ πύργον ἰούσαν,
 ἦκα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον·
 "οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἐκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
 τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·
 αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν·
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς τοίη περ ἑοῦσ' ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,
 μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο."

When they saw Helen approaching the turreted wall, they spoke winged words softly to one another: "It is no disgrace for the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans to suffer for so long on behalf of a woman like this. In her aspect she is like the immortal goddesses, dreadfully so. But still, may she sail home, before she becomes an eternal plague to us and our children."

We are apparently to accept the elders' judgment as a sound one: they are "excellent speakers," and seem, moreover, fairminded (they see both sides of the war, Greek and Trojan), pious (they fear divine appearances), and filled

⁸The song of the cicadas in Plato's *Phaedrus* provides the background to the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus. The cicadas' constant drone is said to be inspiring but also potentially mesmerizing, and Socrates warns Phaedrus of its effect. See *Phaedrus* 258e6-259d8; 262d2-6. See also G.R.F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's "Phaedrus"* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

with paternal concern (they guard the well-being of their children). But perhaps most significant is that the elders sympathize with the warriors, Greek as well as Trojan. Despite their advanced age, and despite their hostility toward the Greeks, the patriarchs of the city respond to Helen exactly as every young Greek and Trojan soldier does. This male bond is stronger even than nationalism. It is one of those rare occasions in the *Iliad* when enemies transcend their hostilities for a moment and discover grounds for sympathy and brotherhood⁹, though, paradoxically, what they share (a desire for Helen) entails division and destruction rather than unity.

The old men's description of Helen correlates with Hesiod's description of Pandora in the *Works and Days*, a poem rooted in the same tradition from which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* emerge. Pandora is made "to resemble an immortal goddess in appearance": ἀθανάτης δὲ θεῆς εἰς ὧπα εἴσκειν (*W&D* 62), and she is endowed by Aphrodite with the ability to provoke "troublesome desire and limb-gnawing cares": πόθον ἀργαλέον καὶ γυιοβόρους μελεδῶνας (*W&D* 66).¹⁰ Similarly, the Trojan elders in the *Iliad* compare Helen's appearance to that of a goddess (αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν·), and equate her presence in their

⁹Such transcendent moments are experienced also by Glaukos and Diomedes in Book Six, and Priam and Achilles in Book Twenty Four.

¹⁰Friedrich Solmsen, ed., *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990).

city with long-suffered pains (τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν).¹¹

Hesiod's response to Pandora and the elders' response to Helen thus share the same mixture of fear, awe, admiration, and attraction. In the *Works and Days*, this ambivalent response turns out to be deeply and manifestly misogynous. Assuming that Hesiod is recording a genuine aspect of the archaic tradition in his depiction of Pandora, we can speculate that whatever affection the *Iliad's* elders feel for Helen, it is nevertheless tainted with this same misogynous ambivalence. As the final scene in the poem will show, horror of Helen does in fact prevail throughout the city of Troy. When Helen expresses horror of herself, then, she gives voice to a sentiment that has been internalized, but is not explicitly spoken, by the characters in the poem.

Priam is singled out from the other elders as he calls to Helen (*Il.3.161-66*):

... Πρίαμος δ' Ἑλένην ἐκαλέσσατο φωνῆ·
 "δεῦρο πάροιθ' ἔλθοῦσα, φίλον τέκος, ἴζευ ἐμεῖο,
 ὄφρα ἴδῃ πρότερόν τε πόσιν πηύς τε φίλους τε--
 οὐ τί μοι αἰτίη ἐσσί, θεοὶ νύ μοι αἰτιοὶ εἰσιν,
 οἵ μοι ἐφώρμησαν πόλεμον πολὺδακρυν Ἀχαιῶν--
 ὥς μοι καὶ τόνδ' ἄνδρα πελώριον ἐξονομήνης..."

Priam called out loud to Helen, "Come over here, dear child, sit next to me so that you can see your former

¹¹Sheila Murnaghan, "Body and Voice in Greek Tragedy," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 1.2 (1988) 28, writes that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* "both are finally more concerned with human efforts to find ways of keeping the body out of view." While Murnaghan's argument is centered primarily on the Homeric warrior's characteristic substitution of speech for bodily contact, further support for her thesis is provided in the Trojan elders' wish, at the sight of Helen's body, to banish her from their land. Throughout the *Iliad*, I would add, Helen's body is the one that most resists displacement.

husband and your dear brothers-in-law--in my opinion you are not to blame, but I think that the gods are to blame, who, in my opinion, incited the grievous hostility of the Greeks--and so that you can identify for me this mighty man here..."

Priam is tender and paternal toward Helen: he calls her "my child." He emphasizes that he does not blame her for starting the war; he blames the gods. But by emphasizing his personal belief in Helen's innocence, Priam suggests that someone else in fact *does* blame her. He repeats *μοι*, for example, three times: "*In my mind*, you are not to blame, *in my mind*, the gods are to blame, who, *in my mind*, kindled the hostilities of the Greeks." As Adkins points out, Priam's absolution of Helen and his impeachment of the gods do not tally with the moral view typically presented in the Homeric poems: "the belief in non-human causation of human action has practically no effects on the ascription of responsibility."¹² Priam's affectionate words to Helen gesture at, while at the same time trying to conceal, someone else's antipathy.

Helen's response to Priam is her first speech in the poem. In the beginning she speaks gently and sweetly. But her speech takes a sudden discursive dive, as if she has lost control of her emotions, thoughts, and words. Self-abuse disrupts the flow of her speech; despondency alternates with lucid description. Nostalgia and remorse seem to overcome her as she remembers that she was once married to Menelaus. She

¹²Arthur W.H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1960) 25. As evidence of the traditional Homeric morality, Adkins cites Zeus at *Od.*1.32ff.: "[men] say that woes come from us; but they themselves suffer pain *huper moron* because of their own misdeeds" (Adkins' translation).

is sorry that she abandoned her daughter, her family, and her friends (Il.3.171-80):

Τὸν δ' Ἑλένη μύθοισιν ἀμείβετο, δῖα γυναικῶν·
 "αἰδοῖός τέ μοί ἐσσι, φίλε ἔκυρέ, δεινός τε·
 ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἀδεῖν κακὸς ὀππότε δεῦρο
 νιέει σῶ ἐπόμην, θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιποῦσα
 παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν.
 ἀλλὰ τά γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο· τὸ καὶ κλαίουσα τέτηκα.
 τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω, ὅ μ' ἀνείρσαι ἦδὲ μεταλλάξαι·
 οὐτός γ' Ἀτρείδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων,
 ἀμφοτέρων βασιλεύς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερός τ' αἰχμητής·
 δαῖρ' αὐτ' ἐμὸς ἔσκε κυνώπιδος, εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε."

Then Helen answered him, goddess among women, "I am humble before you and full of wonder, my father-in-law. If only terrible death had pleased me when I followed your son here, abandoning my bedchamber, my relatives, my young daughter, and friends my own age. But it was not to be; wherefore I am melting in my tears. I will tell you this which you have asked and inquired about. This is the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, both a king and a mighty spear-fighter. He was my brother-in-law, dog that I am, if ever there was."

According to the Trojan elders, Helen's beauty is frightening; she is visibly terrible and threatening. Her words, however, serve to palliate the threat posed by her appearance. By abusing herself and wishing for her own death, Helen in a sense reassures Priam that she is weaker and worse in every way than he is. Whereas he represents monogamy, loyalty, and constancy, she admits her failure in all these respects. With her voice, Helen thus transforms herself from a dangerous figure to a helpless and therefore reassuring one. By speaking this way, she effectively neutralizes her appearance.

Priam's response suggests that he is ignoring most of what she has said. He seems only to have heard her identify

Agamemnon, for what he says after Helen falls silent is addressed to Agamemnon, as if Agamemnon could hear him (he cannot): "O blessed son of Atreus, child of fortune, favored by the gods..." (*Il.*3.182-190). He acts, in fact, as if Helen has said nothing at all. There is, however, a hint of his awareness that Helen is still sitting beside him and of his discomfort about this. While admiring the large numbers among Agamemnon's troops, Priam recollects the time when he fought with a large number of Phrygians against the Amazon warriors, female warriors whom he describes as ἀντιάνθρωποι, "a match for men." But they were fewer in number, Priam concludes, and were ultimately defeated. While Priam does not *conspicuously* fear Helen--in fact he welcomes her presence beside him and in his city--his remarkable failure to respond to her directly when she speaks, together with this timely recollection of his victorious battle against the Amazons, suggest that Helen does awaken fear and anxiety in him.¹³

If Helen's self-abuse reassures Priam of her harmlessness, the text does not positively register it. Turning now to the *critics'* responses to Helen's speech, we

¹³For a similar reading of Helen's dialogue with Priam, see Christine Froula, "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History," *Feminist Theory in Practice and Process*, ed. Micheline R. Malson, et al. (Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1986) 139-162. Froula argues that Helen's death-wish expresses her resistance to male-dominated society: "she translates her desire for her old life into a death wish that expresses at once culturally induced masochism and the intensity of her resistance to her own entanglement in the warriors' plot" (142). "Priam," Froula observes, "seems not to notice Helen's misery....That Amazons come to his mind suggests that, on some level, he has heard Helen's desires. Priam's speech recapitulates his conflict with Helen, and hers with Greek culture, as an archetypal conflict between male and female powers" (142).

observe that Helen's words are generally perceived as reassuring.¹⁴ In the note appended to his translation of these lines, Pope extols the depiction of Helen's diffidence and remorse for its power to produce in every reader, not only the characters in the poem, magnanimous and affectionate feelings for her:

her amiable behaviour here, ...the relentings of her soul, the confusion she appears in, the veiling her face, and dropping her tear; are particulars so beautifully natural, as to make every reader, no less than Menelaus himself, inclined to forgive her at least, if not to love her.

Perry, in nineteenth-century England, took a similar view of the power of Helen's "sweet, penitential remorse for her past transgression [to] render her one of the most interesting and charming figures in ancient history." Mary Lefkowitz, in a recent book on women in Greek mythology, views Helen's self-effacement as one of the ways in which Helen "contrives to be appreciated even by those who had suffered the most on her account."¹⁵ This effect of Helen's words, and perhaps even her intention in uttering them, may be explained in simple psychological terms. By blaming herself first, she anticipates being blamed by others; if she attacks herself, perhaps others will feel obliged to protect and comfort her

¹⁴Only Froula (1986) has noticed that Helen's words are received by Priam as defiant; he is not at all reassured by what she says.

¹⁵Alexander Pope, *The 'Iliad' of Homer*, vol.2 (London: F.J. DuRoveray, 1813) 36; Walter Copland Perry, *The Women of Homer* (NY: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1898), 171; Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), 135. Compare Beye's argument that Helen uses her physical beauty to win the affection of her enemies, because she "has no legitimate male protector." Her "often expressed desire to die," Beye adds, is also a function of this deficiency: Charles Rowan Beye, "Male and Female in the Homeric Poems," *Ramus* 3 (1974) 88.

instead. Alternatively, it may be said that Helen's voice serves to turn her into a fetish: the danger that her appearance represents is defused by the counter-image projected by Helen in her own voice. She represents herself as dangerous chiefly to herself, as passive and "melting." As Laura Mulvey states, the fetishized object "becomes reassuring rather than dangerous."¹⁶

Helen's self-abusive speech is in fact frequently analyzed in such psychological terms. But Helen is a literary character after all, and her words have literary sources and analogues. Her expressions of self-hatred have not, however, been examined in their native literary context: the misogynous sentiments which pervade archaic Greek poetry. I propose this comparison as my method of study.

Let us begin with the most fundamental archaic convention of female life, according to which a woman's life consists of two (and only two) events: marriage (or sexual initiation) and death.¹⁷ Helen reproduces this convention by merging her wish for death with the memory of her elopement: love and marriage are telescoped with death in her expression of what she wishes. This configuration of female life

¹⁶Quoted in Amy Lawrence, *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press, 1991) 49; see Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16 no.3 (1975) 14.

¹⁷For the Greek poetic convention of "shaping...human life into *helikiai*" see Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Life* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990), esp. pp.3-4. Garland neglects to mention that the stages of life established by Solon and Hesiod apply to men only. As Carson (below, note 18) shows, women's lives were envisioned on a very different scale.

persists through every period of Greek poetry. One image, for instance, that is used to represent the woman's life is a flower, which begins to wither and rot as soon as it has been plucked.¹⁸ In the *Cologne Epode* of Archilochus, for example, the narrator-seducer rejects the older sister Neoboule because she is no longer a virgin (17-18): "ἄλλος ἀνήρ ἐχέτω· αἰαί, πέπειρα δὴ πέλει./ ἄνθος δ' ἀπερρύθηκε παρθενήιον" ("Some other man can have her; ahh! she is putrid indeed, now that her maiden flower has dropped").¹⁹ The imagery suggests that a woman is no longer desirable after her first sexual experience, the dropping of her "maiden flower."

This use of flower imagery is not restricted to lover's discourse in erotic poetry; in (the surviving fragment of) a wedding song, Sappho compares a bride to a hyacinth (105c):

οἶαν τὰν ὑάκινθον ἐν ὄρεσι ποιμένες ἄνδρες
πόσσι καταστειβοῖσι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος...²⁰

Like the hyacinth in the mountains which the shepherd men with their feet trample, and on the ground the purple flower...

The flower flourishes in the hills for the length of a verse; the next verse pictures it dead on the ground. Marriage (or sexual maturity) thus coincides on the symbolic level with

¹⁸On images of "ripeness" used to connote female sexual readiness, see Anne Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place: Women, Dirt, and Desire," *Before Sexuality: The Construction of the Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David Halperin, et al. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990) 145-48.

¹⁹The younger woman, resisting the narrator's erotic desires, insists that Neoboule is young and ready for marriage (*Col. Ep.* 3-4): "ἔστιν ἐν ἡμετέρῳ ἢ νῦν μέγ' ἰμείρει γάμου/ καλὴ τέρπεινα παρθένος" ("In our house there is a fine young woman who very much wants to marry now"). Text of the *Cologne Epode* is from David A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982) 463-64.

²⁰Campbell (1982) 50.

death: "There is no such thing as sexually vigorous ripe womanhood in the Greek view," Anne Carson writes. "At her peak a woman is sexually untried, whereas the ἡλικία or ὀπώρα of a man emphatically includes sexual activity....As soon as she lets her *anthos* (flower) fall, the female is translated to the slippery slope of overripeness."²¹

This conventional view of women is also reflected in an apothegm attributed to Hipponax (Fr.Chol.Adesp.1):²²

δύ' ἡμέραι γυναικός εἰσιν ἡδισταί,
ὅταν γαμῆ τις κάκφέρνη τεθνηκυῖαν.

Woman's two most gratifying days are when someone marries her and when he carries out the dead body.

Women are here disparaged categorically. A woman's pleasures are described as passive ones: she is happy when *someone marries her* (not when she marries someone) *and when he carries her out* as a corpse, no longer even alive to enjoy the second happy day in her "life."²³ The narrator is evidently a man; he claims to understand women and what makes them happy. He states with authority that women only are happy twice: when they marry and when they die.

Coincidentally, though, this view agrees with the one implied by Archilochus in the *Cologne Epode*, where he wants to seduce

²¹Carson (1990) 147.

²²Campbell (1982) 89. Stobaeus identifies Hipponax as the author of the verses (4.22.35); but they appear also in a Berlin anthology, under a different (illegible) name. See Campbell (1982) 377. Douglas E. Gerber offers a (mild) defense of the attribution made by Stobaeus: "the satirical nature of the verses does not seem out of keeping with the remains of Hipponax," in *Euterpe: An Anthology of Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac, and Iambic Poetry* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970) 297.

²³I interpret γυναικός as a subjective genitive: "the days a woman most enjoys...."

only the virgin, not her older, more experienced sister. The pithiness of Hipponax's epigram itself reflects the brevity of a woman's life: the subject of a woman's happiness does not require more than two verses; and the interval between a woman's wedding and her funeral is invisible, blotted out as *καί* and *ἐκφέρη* are elided in the middle of the second verse. Hipponax thus ascribes to woman's *own* desire the moral objective that is traditionally prescribed *for* her.

Helen's speech to Priam on the walls resonates with comparable diction and feeling. Homer attributes to her the view that death is (or would have been) "pleasant": "If only terrible death had pleased me (*ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἀδεῖν κακός*) when I followed your son here." Eloping and dying are featured as the salient events in Helen's life; she spends the interval between elopement and death "melting in tears" ("*ἀλλὰ τὰ γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο· τὸ καὶ κλαίουσα τέτηκα*"). According to her own description, her life consists in marrying and dying.

I would like to turn now to Helen's second death-wish, found in *Iliad* 6. At this juncture in the poem, Helen is in her bedroom with Paris, and they are visited by Hector. Helen speaks to Hector in words that the narrator describes as (paradoxically in my opinion) "soothing": *μύθοι μιλίχιοι* (*Il.6.343*). Hector, by contrast, uses deliberately abrasive language: he has come back to Troy fresh from the heat of battle looking for Paris in order to rebuke him with "shaming words" (*νεῖκεσσαν...αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσσι, Il.6.325*). Hector lectures Paris, urging him to leave his bedroom and return to battle.

Hector intends to agitate Paris; he is clearly agitated himself, troubled with the concerns of a leader in a time of great crisis.

Helen's language is represented as the opposite of Hector's: hers is "soothing" where his is rousing (though her speech may be read as *sexually arousing*; more on this below). Hector's speech is also effective: he succeeds in moving Paris to fight. Helen's speech, on the other hand, is ineffectual: she fails to make Hector sit down with her. Hector expresses the wish to save Trojan lives, while the wish for her own death is the central topic in Helen's speech. Finally, their speeches are stylistically dissimilar: Hector's is direct, without digression (Il.6.326-31):

"δαιμόνι', οὐ μὲν καλὰ χόλον τόνδ' ἔνθεο θυμῷ.
 λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθουσι περὶ πτόλιν αἰπύ τε τεῖχος
 μαρνάμενοι· σέο δ' εἵνεκ' αὐτὴ τε πτόλεμος τε
 ἄστυ τόδ' ἀμφιδέδηε· σὺ δ' ἂν μαχέσαιο καὶ ἄλλῳ,
 ὄν τινά που μεθιέντα ἴδοις στυγεροῦ πολέμοιο.
 ἄλλ' ἄνα, μὴ τάχα ἄστυ πυρὸς δηΐοιο θέρηται. "

"Strange man, it is not fair that you harbor this wrath in your heart. The troops are dying in the struggle around the city and the wall; because of you this city is hemmed in by the clash of arms and the call to battle. You too would fight with the soldier you spied dodging his dreadful duty. So get up! before the city is burned by the enemy fire."

The style and content of Hector's speech reflect his character: he is devoted to the city and does not waste words when he is needed on the battlefield.

By contrast, Helen's speech wanders and lurches discursively in the style familiar to us now from her speech to Priam on the Trojan walls. She invites Hector to sit down;

her invitation is caught, however, in a web of words suggesting despair, regret, and self-hatred (*Il.6.343-58*):

τὸν δ' Ἑλένη μύθοισι προσηύδα μελιχίῳσι·
 "δᾶερ ἐμεῖο κυνὸς κακομηχάνου ὀκρυοέσεως,
 ὡς μ' ὄφελ' ἦματι τῷ ὅτε με πρῶτον τέκε μήτηρ
 οἴχεσθαι προφέρουσα κακῇ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα
 εἰς ὄρος ἢ εἰς κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
 ἔνθα με κῦμ' ἀπόερσε πάρος τάδε ἔργα γενέσθαι.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάδε γ' ὦδε θεοὶ κακὰ τεκμήρανο,
 ἀνδρὸς ἔπειτ' ὠφέλλον ἀμείνονος εἶναι ἄκοιτις,
 ὃς ἤδη νέμεσίν τε καὶ αἴσχεα πόλλ' ἀνθρώπων.
 τούτῳ δ' οὔτ' ἄρ νῦν φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω
 ἔσσονται· τῷ καὶ μιν ἐπαυρήσεσθαι οἴω.
 ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν εἴσελθε καὶ ἔζεο τῷδ' ἐπὶ δίφρῳ,
 δᾶερ, ἐπεὶ σε μάλιστα πόνος φρένας ἀμφιβέβηκεν
 εἶνεκ' ἐμεῖο κυνὸς καὶ Ἀλεχάνδρου ἔνεκ' ἄτης,
 οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόρον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω
 ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' αἰοίδιμοι ἔσσομένοισι."

And so Helen addressed [Hector] with soothing words:
 "Brother-in-law of Helen, the horrible, evil-minded dog,
 if only on the very day when my mother gave me birth a
 terrible wrenching windstorm had carried me off into a
 mountain or a wave of the plangent sea, where the wave
 would have washed me away before these deeds were done.
 But since the gods have decreed these evil deeds, I wish
 then that I had been the wife of a better man, one who
 understood the concept of blame and the standards of
 human shame. This man's wits are infirm, they will never
 be reliable; and I think he will feel the consequences
 of that. But come now, approach and be seated on this
 chair, brother-in-law, especially since trouble has
 gripped your heart because of the dog that I am and the
 crime of Paris, on whom Zeus has set a wretched fate,
 that we might be sung in men's songs in succeeding
 generations."

Helen's language is marked by pleonasm, repetition, and the juxtaposition of opposites (birth/death; mountain/sea; blame of Paris/praise of Hector). Her speech is also marked by ring structure, framed by the assertions that she is a "dog," and that her fate was decided by the will of the gods. We

will be returning to these two conspicuously placed assertions shortly.

But for a moment I would like to survey some of the responses to Helen's "soothing words," starting with Hector's. Hector refuses her invitation to sit down: "μή με κάθιζ', Ἑλένη, φιλέουσά περ· οὐδέ με πείσεις" ("Don't make me sit down, Helen, although you are very dear; you will not persuade me," *Il.* 6.360). Like Priam before him, Hector ignores Helen's self-abusive language, turning his attention away from her and toward battle instead.

The epithet *μελίχιοι* is a problem; Helen's words are certainly not very "soothing," least of all with regard to herself. Several critics try to justify the use of this word "soothing" as a description of Helen's clearly troubled speech.²⁴ For example, Emily Vermeule emphasizes the merely decorative aspect of Helen's death-wish, identifying it as "a safe feminine wish, unlikely to be fulfilled."²⁵ Others analyze Helen's suggestion that Hector sit and rest as erotic, claiming that her offer contains "sexual overtones...presented with delicacy";²⁶ the chair that she

²⁴A variant in mss. g replaces *προσηύδα μελιχίοισι* with *ἀμείβετο δία γονιακῶν*, a formulaic phrase that would solve the apparent problem raised by application of the adjective "soft" to words that are hard on Helen.

²⁵Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1979) 169.

²⁶For "sexual overtones" see Marilyn B. Arthur, "The Divided World of *Iliad* VI," *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Helene P. Foley (NY: Gordon and Breach, Science Publishers, 1981) 29. Foley supports her interpretation with references to *Iliad* 3, where to "sit next to Paris" has apparently sexual connotations (3.406, 424-26). But a passage in *Iliad* 24 militates against reading sexual suggestion into all references to "sitting together"; this scene, in which Achilles invites Priam to sit with him, clearly shares something with Helen's words to Hector:

offers him is said to "embody the attractiveness of yielding to feminine persuasion and turning away from heroism."²⁷ Helen's address to Hector has thus come to be regarded as a specifically *feminine*, even an *erotic* discourse. I argue that such interpretations fail to account for the presence of familiar *male poetic conventions* in Helen's speech. These conventions become clear when we compare Helen's speech to Hector with passages from Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, and from Semonides' famous diatribe against women (fr.7).²⁸

The major points of comparison between Helen's speech and these poems are what was identified a moment ago as its frame: she calls herself a dog, and holds the gods responsible for her fate. Both of these ideas are prominently featured in Hesiod's and Semonides' accounts of female nature.

If she had been destroyed on the day she was born, Helen says, she would have had no part in *τάδε ἔργα*, "these deeds" (345-48). She is aware that the gods control *τάδε κακά*, "these

"ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ κατ' ἄρ' ἔζευ ἐπὶ θρόνου, ἄλγεα δ' ἔμπης/ ἐν θυμῷ κατακείσθαι ἐάσομεν ἀχνόμενοι περ" ("But come now, sit upon the chair, and we will let the pain rest in our heart, although we are grieving," 24.522-23). What Helen and Achilles each demonstrate by this gesture is their desire to offer comfort and safety; each, I think, perceives that he or she incites a kind of fear in their visitor: Achilles in Priam and Helen in Hector.

²⁷ For "feminine persuasion and turning away from heroism," see Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 6-7. Griffin's reading may owe something to the opinion expounded by J. Kakridis, that "It is the main poetic mission of a woman in the *Iliad* to consciously exert this restraining power over men, trying to avert them from doing their duty as they feel they should," in "The Role of Woman in the *Iliad*," *Eranos* 54 (1956) 24.

²⁸ For the interpretation of Semonides fr.7 as a polemical reading of Hesiod's story of Pandora see Nicole Loraux, "Sur le race des femmes et quelques-unes de ses tribus," *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 43-87.

evil deeds" (349), but this knowledge does not keep her either from blaming herself for being *κακομήχανος*, "evilminded" (344), or from regretting that she married a shameless and foolish man (350-51). Thus, even though Helen recognizes the role played by the gods, and by Zeus in particular, in determining her "unhappy fate" (357), she associates the world's problems with her own existence, and imagines that they would all be solved if she were dead. Similarly, in Hesiod's *Works and Days* the creation of the first woman, Pandora, marks the end of man's carefree existence and the beginning of sorrow, suffering, and disease. Here too the gods are said to have created woman with the potential for evil deeds; Zeus in particular aims to take vengeance on the human race by creating woman (*W&D* 54-82). Even so, Pandora herself is represented in the poem as the agent of evil when, by taking the lid off the jar full of evils, "she invented sorrow and misery for men," *ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρὰ* (*W&D* 95).

In the *Theogony* Hesiod offers a different version of woman's origins. The gods design the first woman as a *καλὸν κακόν*, a "beautiful evil" (*Theog.*585); men thus embrace her, seduced by her appearance. However passive beauty is, the first woman is nevertheless blamed for reproducing more woman like herself (*Theog.* 590-93):

ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων,
 τῆς γὰρ ὀλώϊόν ἐστι γένος καὶ φύλα γυναικῶν,
 πῆμα μέγ' αἰὶ θνητοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσι ναϊετάουσιν
 οὐλομένης πενίης οὐ σύμφοροι, ἀλλὰ κόροιο.

For from her springs the race of women and womankind and from her comes the deadly race and the tribes of women, who dwell among mortal men as a great source of woe, a burden in hard times, if not in prosperity.

Woman cause a man to suffer whether or not he marries, according to Hesiod: if he takes a wife, he is made miserable by constant toil to keep his wife fed. On the other hand, the man who does not marry is unhappy in old age because he has neither a wife nor children to care for him and to inherit his possessions (*Theog.*594-612).

Semonides likewise associates Zeus's creation of women with the ruin of men (fr.7.115-18):

Zeὺς γὰρ μέγιστον τοῦτ' ἐποίησεν κακόν
καὶ δεσμὸν ἀμφέθηκεν ἄρρηκτον πέδης,
ἐξ οὗ τε τοὺς μὲν Ἄϊδης ἐδέξατο
γυναικὸς εἶνεκ' ἀμφιδηριωμένους.²⁹

For Zeus put this immense evil and unbreakable shackle around man's foot; and since that time, Hades has been greeting the souls of the men who died fighting because of a woman.

Throughout this poem Semonides abuses and blames women categorically: they are sloppy, fickle, disobedient, lazy, moody, whorish, vain, and ugly; he praises only one of the ten types of women that he describes: this one is the wife who produces respectable children and refuses to gossip with other women about sex (90-91). The ideal woman restrains her speech, and it is this quality that sets her above the rest. In other words, most women are not a reward worth fighting or dying for. Semonides would agree with Helen that men suffer

²⁹Semonides fr. 7 in Campbell (1982) 13-17.

not on behalf of the ideal woman, but for an evil-minded woman who is ultimately not a prize worth keeping.

This comparison highlights as conventional the complaint that life on earth is filled with pain and toil. Hesiod and Semonides each offers as an aetiology for the human condition a description of the origins and nature of women: women are designed by the gods to cause men to suffer. Helen, too, offers an aetiology--not of universal suffering, but of Hector's in particular: he must toil, she says, because of her own evil nature, wicked mind, and shameful character. Even if the gods made her the way she is, she nevertheless blames herself in almost the same way that Hesiod and Semonides blame woman categorically.

Another feature of Helen's speech that reminds us of a convention in the misogynous poets is her use of "dog" as a term of abuse.³⁰ In the opening words of her speech, Helen addresses Hector as, "Brother-in-law of an evil-minded terrible dog, me," and later in the speech calls herself a dog again: "because of me, dog that I am" ("εἶνεκ' ἐμείο κυνός," 6.356). In *Iliad* 3 she refers to herself as "dog-faced": "δαῖρ αὐτ' ἐμὸς ἔσκε κυνώπιδος" ("[Agamemnon] was brother-in-law to me the dog-faced," *Il.*3.180. See also *Od.*4.145, where Helen

³⁰For other associations of dogs in ancient literature, see Saara Lilja, *Dogs in Ancient Greek Poetry* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1976), esp. pp.13-53 on dogs in archaic poetry, and pp.21-25 on "'Dog' as a Term of Abuse" in Homeric poetry. Lilja attaches no special importance to Helen's application of the abusive epithet "dog" to herself; its significance, in fact, is de-emphasized by Lilja, in agreement with the opinion of an earlier scholar, William D. Geddes, that "self-accusation never has intensity like the taunt of another" (Lilja, 22n.32).

tells Telemachos that the Achaeans went to Troy "ἐμείο κυνόπιδος εἵνεκα").

Both "dog" and "dog-faced" appear frequently in the Homeric poems as terms of abuse against the enemy: "the only metaphorical term of abuse in Homer that is derived from the sphere of animals," writes Saara Lilja.³¹ It applies to both men and women. For instance, Achilles calls Agamemnon "dog-faced" when Agamemnon threatens to take Briseis away from him (*Il.*1.159). Elsewhere in his speech Achilles declares Agamemnon "shameless" (149, 158). "Shameless dog" is almost formulaic: sent by Zeus, Iris scolds Athena: 'ἀλλὰ σύ γ' αἰνιοτάτη, κύον ἀδεές, εἰ ἐτέόν γε/τολμήσεις Διὸς ἄντα πελώριον ἔγχος ἀεῖραι" ("You are the fearsomest indeed, you shameless dog, if you actually are going to dare to raise your giant spear against Zeus," *Il.*8.423-24). Hera likewise chastises Artemis for daring to fight with her betters: "πῶς δὲ σὺ νῦν μέμονας, κύον ἀδεές, ἀντί' ἐμείο/στήσεσθαι;" ("Now what makes you think, you shameless dog, that you can stand up against me?" *Il.*21.481-82). Artemis, Athena, and Agamemnon are all "dogs" when they act or speak too boldly, and when, by their fierce determination to do exactly what pleases them, they evince total disrespect for the standards of social order and propriety. The maid Melanthe is also a "dog" in the *Odyssey* specifically because of the impudent speech she addresses to Odysseus in disguise; he reviles her and threatens: "I will tell Telemachos what you say, you dog, when he comes to chop you up limb by limb"

³¹Lilja (1976) 21.

(*Od.*18.338-39. The other maids are also "dogs" at *Od.*19.154,372, and Clytemnestra is "dog-faced" at *Od.*11.424).

Although in Homer "dog" applies to men and women, Semonides of Amorgos, tracing the origins of women to various animal species, writes that one type of woman comes from the dog (fr.7.12-20):

τὴν δ' ἐκ κυνὸς λιτουργόν, αὐτομήτορα,
ἢ πάντ' ἀκούσαι, πάντα δ' εἰδέναι θέλει,
πάντη δὲ παπταίνουσα καὶ πλανωμένη
λέληκεν, ἦν καὶ μηδέν' ἀνθρώπων ὄρα.
παύσειε δ' ἄν μιν οὐτ' ἀπειλήσας ἀνὴρ,
οὐδ' εἰ χολωθεὶς ἐξαράξειεν λίθῳ
ὀδόντας οὐδ' ἄν μελίχως μυθεύμενος,
οὐδ' εἰ παρὰ ξείνοισιν ἡμένη τύχη·
ἄλλ' ἐμπέδως ἀπρηκτον αὐονὴν ἔχει.

Another type is born of the dog: a scamp, just like her mother; she wants to hear it all, to know it all: she puts her nose into everything, ranges all over with her loud barking, even if she doesn't see anyone. Her husband couldn't restrain her with threats, nor, if irritated, with a rock well aimed at her teeth, nor with cajoling words; neither does the company of strangers keep her in check; but she incessantly keeps up that useless yammering.

Again, "dog" connotes impudent speech and action. It is shameless for a woman to be the hearing, knowing, or speaking subject.

Pandora in Hesiod's *Works and Days* is also described as dog-like. Zeus ordered Hermes to endow the first woman with "a dog's mind and a thievish nature" (κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπικλοπον ἦθος, *W&D* 67-68). Following Zeus' orders, Hermes is said to put in Pandora's breast ψεύδεά θ' αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπικλοπον ἦθος (*W&D* 78); apparently the phrase ψεύδεά θ' αἰμυλίους τε λόγους, "lies and wily words," is the equivalent of κύνεον νόον, "a dog's

mind". Like Hermes, but also like a dog, Pandora is by her very nature a trickster.

If "dog" is a conventional term of abuse in Homer, used of men as well as women, is it unusual that Hesiod describes Pandora as having a dog's mind, or that Semonides derives one type of woman from the dog? If this were the only point of contiguity among the three texts, it might not mean much that Helen calls herself a dog. But this word is not, in fact, the only element in her speech that overlaps with the misogynistic poetry of Hesiod and Semonides. Helen also evokes their depictions of woman by associating her existence with the beginning of the world's woes. Moreover, in her conversation with Priam in *Iliad* 3, Helen expresses a view of her own existence which, by highlighting only marriage and death, and by speaking of death as potentially a "pleasure," coincides with a common view of the female condition expressed in archaic poetry. All of this evidence strongly suggests that the language Helen uses to abuse herself, including her wishes for death, corresponds to the language used by Hesiod, Semonides, and Hipponax to abuse women categorically. Thus placed in its literary-historical context, Helen's self-abuse expresses misogynous beliefs generally prevalent in archaic writing.

Helen's discourse is usually regarded as markedly feminine, on account of its discursive style, "soothing" quality, its alleged seductive aim, and apparent ineffectiveness. But because it resembles language used by

Hesiod, Semonides, and Hipponax to abuse women generally, I argue against defining it as "female" or "feminine." Helen is invented as a female character, but her self-hatred, self-blame, and wish to die are clearly related to male and cultural prejudices against women.

Helen is the only character in the *Iliad* allowed to voice this cultural prejudice, and thus it comes to be expressed as self-hatred. However, Helen frequently mentions something that is never actually evident in the poem: that she is insulted and reviled by the Trojans. Again, Helen herself expresses out loud what other characters (and figures in the *Iliad's* background) are evidently thinking and feeling. When, for example, she notices her brothers Castor and Polydeuces missing from battle, she tells Priam they must be hiding in fear of the "many insults and reproaches" directed at her ("αἴσχεα δειδιότες καὶ ὀνειδέα πόλλ' ἅ μοί ἐστιν," *Il.3.242*). We never hear such insults, but clearly Helen does. Later, when Helen resists Aphrodite's order to join Paris in their bedroom, she argues that if she goes, "all the Trojan women will later blame me": "Τρῳαὶ δέ μ' ὀπίσσω/πᾶσαι μωμήσονται" (*Il.3.411-12*). Finally, in the closing scene of the poem, Helen says that she has always been hated by her Trojan family; she is forever insulted by everyone in the palace, except Priam and Hector, and they all shiver when they see her (*Iliad* 24.768-75):

"ἀλλ' εἴ τις με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
δαέρων ἢ γαλόων ἢ εἰνατέρων εὐπέπλων,

ἦ ἔκυρή--ἔκυρὸς δὲ πατὴρ ὡς ἥπιος αἰεῖ--,
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος κατέρυκες,
 σῆ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνη καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσι.
 τῶ σέ θ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἅμμορον ἀχνυμένη κῆρ·
 οὐ γάρ τις μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ
 ἥπιος οὐδὲ φίλος, πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν . "

"But if someone else in the house scorned me, one of my brothers-in-law or one of their well-dressed sisters or wives, or my mother-in-law--how gentle was my father-in-law always--you would hold them back and appease them with your words, with your kindheartedness and your kind words. Therefore, at the same time I weep for you and I grieve in my heart for my own wretched fate. For there is not a soul left in all of wide Troy who is gentle or friendly to me, but everyone shudders at me."

Helen's revelation that everyone in Troy has always hated and feared her casts new light on what the Trojan elders said about her on the walls in *Iliad* 3. The elders' voices were compared with the cicadas'. We said above that the defining feature of the cicadas' song is its constant presence in the background. The analogy thus implies that the elders' fear of Helen's appearance and their wish for her departure from Troy are ever present in the background of the poem. This is confirmed by Helen's statement that everyone in Troy fears and hates her.

Helen wishes for her own death three times in the *Iliad*, but the people of Troy seem to wish constantly for her disappearance; the *Iliad* does not explicitly record *their* hatred of Helen, only *Helen's hatred of herself*. Helen's last wish for death is uttered, appropriately, before the entire population of Troy as she laments the death of Hector (*Il.*24.762-64):

"Ἐκτορ, ἐμῷ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,
 ἦ μὲν μοι πόσις ἐστὶν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής,

ὅς μ' ἄγαγε Τροίηνδ'· ὡς πρὶν ὄφελον ὀλέσθαι."

"Hector, far the dearest to my heart of all my brothers-in-law, my husband is Paris of god-like beauty, who brought me to Troy; if only I had died before."

Every thought leads Helen somehow to wish for her own death. Hector reminds her of his brother Paris, who, in turn, reminds her of herself; and this, finally, reminds her that she wishes she had died. Helen's death-wish is here in the context of a lament, and lamentation is a feminine discourse in the *Iliad*. One might therefore be tempted to associate her death-wish with this specific form of feminine discourse. And yet, as I have shown, Helen's death-wish is ultimately related to popular sentiment: Greek and Trojan sentiments implicit in the poem, and sentiments that are commonly expressed by the archaic poets.

Critics often disregard Helen's claim that she is hated and constantly insulted in Troy. Lacking clear evidence in the poem to support her claim, they dismiss it. M.L. West writes: "In spite of what [Helen] says about the Trojans hating her, Homer shows her always in a harmonious and affectionate relationship with those about her. His Helen is...the most marvellous, sincere, sweet-natured woman in ancient literature" (emphasis mine).³² This statement suggests that Helen's appearance is more reliable and ultimately more meaningful than what she says. Like Priam and Hector, West does not respond directly to Helen's wish for death, and fails to see that the source for Helen's death-

³²M.L. West, *Immortal Helen: An Inaugural Lecture* (London: University of London, 1975) 3.

wish is a popular prejudice against her in the *Iliad*. But West's failure to see this is merely symptomatic of the larger critical inability to recognize that Helen's death-wish derives from a popular prejudice of a much larger scope, an archaic prejudice against women categorically. I propose that we acknowledge not only this immediate connection between Helen's self-abuse and the general misogyny of archaic Greek poetry, but also the larger relationship between this misogyny and, ultimately, the entire literary tradition of heroines who wish to die.

Part Two

Euripides: The Rhetoric of Self-Sacrifice

In Part One it was seen that Helen's death-wishes in the *Iliad* give expression to the antipathy that the Greeks and Trojans feel for her, and that her language closely resembles the language used by archaic poets in their pointedly misogynous texts. I argued that the heroine's own voice thus serves as a conduit for the cultural prejudice against women. Because it is *her* voice, and because she expresses, above all, self-contempt and the wish for death, I argued that the *Iliad* forges a link between this "rhetoric of self-destruction" and women themselves. In this way the Homeric depiction of Helen establishes at the root of western literature the association between self-destruction and the feminine.

Turning now to the plays of Euripides, we find in his depiction of self-sacrificing heroines several variations of the paradigm established by Homer's Helen. Like Homer, Euripides represents the heroines' voices being used as instruments of other people's feelings: as his heroines adapt their discourse to the discourse and the desire of male characters, the female wish for death emerges as a construction of male desire. In this chapter we will consider

the rhetoric of self-sacrifice in four plays, *Alcestis*, *Heraclidae*, *Hecuba*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Each play features a heroine who, by endorsing her own death, complies with the wishes of principal male characters.

Euripides complicates the phenomenon of the female death-wish by adding a specific, somewhat unexpected male response: the heroine's self-sacrifice not only fulfills a male fantasy, but also serves to awaken erotic desire among the male characters in the play. Though not apparent in every play here discussed, eroticization of the willing female victim occurs as a major variation on the theme of female self-sacrifice, most notably in the *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*. If, in the other plays, the dying heroine is not explicitly eroticized, she is at least valorized in a way that implies a desire to have more women like her. *Alcestis*, for example, is idealized in the text in which she offers to die for her husband.

Critics have recently begun to examine the similar tendency among readers of Euripides to idealize the heroines in his plays of self-sacrifice. Until recently, Euripides' self-sacrificing heroines were routinely celebrated as well-drawn representations of feminine virtue. A. W. Schlegel, for example, marveled that "the first half [of the *Hecuba*] possesses great beauties of the kind in which Euripides is chiefly successful: pictures of tender youth, female innocence, and noble resignation to an early and violent

death."¹ Even as late as 1990 this school of interpretation still has its followers. Jennifer March, in "Euripides the Misogynist?" argues that "one could pick out some of Euripides' fine women, his noble, courageous, self-sacrificing women, and say that no man who puts such women on the stage could possibly be a misogynist."² March adduces as further proof that Euripides was not a misogynist his "acute knowledge and understanding of female psychology."³ This popular critical opinion--that Euripides' self-sacrificing heroines are "successful" and insightful portraits of good women--implies that feminine virtue consists in women's self-sacrificing or masochistic impulses.

But in my analysis of the plays, I will argue that the offer of self-sacrifice should not be interpreted as a sign of goodness or nobility. This may be the interpretation advanced by certain characters *in the play*, but the texts themselves invite us, the readers *outside the play*, to see the heroine's wish or willingness to die in a different light. Thus I will argue that the self-sacrificing heroine in Euripides does not suggest the greatness of women who are willing to die; rather, Euripides employs the self-

¹August Wilhelm Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1809), tr. John Black (Philadelphia: Hogan and Thompson, 1833) 99-100.

²Jennifer March, "Euripides the Misogynist?" in *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality*, Anton Powell, ed. (London and NY: Routledge, 1990) 33.

³*ibid.* Euripides' "knowledge and understanding of female psychology," adds March, "is demonstrated throughout the whole corpus of [his] works, and it does, of course, suggest (though not prove) that Euripides had a strong sympathy with the female sex" (64 n.7).

sacrificing heroine to underscore a problem in Greek culture: the male desire for, and reliance on, female self-sacrifice.

Alcestis

The *Alcestis* was produced in the year 438 B.C.E., seventeen years after Euripides first competed in the dramatic festivals at Athens. For modern readers, though, this play marks in effect the start of Euripides' career, since it is the earliest of his tragedies that have come down to us from antiquity.⁴ From my own perspective, the *Alcestis* is primary because it is the play in which Euripides first introduces the theme of female self-sacrifice. By offering to die in place of her husband Admetus, *Alcestis* anticipates the scenes of female self-sacrifice that are a feature of subsequent plays, including the *Heraclidae* (430 B.C.E.), *Hecuba* (424), and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (405).

Although the *Alcestis* has always been a favorite play among scholars and poets,⁵ it is often excluded from critical

⁴Scholars who consider the *Rhesus* a genuine work of Euripides usually place it earlier than the *Alcestis*. See, for instance, Anne Pippin Burnett, "Rhesus: Are Smiles Allowed?" in *Directions in Euripidean Criticism*, ed. Peter Burian (Durham: Duke UP, 1985) 13-51, and for further bibliography, 177-188.

⁵For a summary of the major scholarly interpretations, see Michael Lloyd, "Euripides' *Alcestis*," *G&R* 32 no.2 (1985) 119-31, esp. 119-20. The abundance of proposed interpretations of the play may be attributed to the curious mixture of tragic and satyric elements in it; for this

discussions devoted specifically to the theme of human sacrifice in Euripides. It is, for instance, neglected in E.A.M.E. O'Connor-Visser's book, *Aspects of Human Sacrifice in the Tragedies of Euripides*, the scope of which is the group of plays in which human sacrifice both "has been instigated by a superhuman demand" and "serve[s] some communal purpose." What sets Alcestis apart from the self-sacrificing heroines (and the hero, Menoecus) studied by O'Connor-Visser is that she "accept[s] death for purely personal reasons."⁶ This distinction is traditional: the theme of self-sacrifice in Euripides has long been treated as part of a larger story-pattern involving civic structures or religious rituals.⁷ In this view, the death of Alcestis is anomalous because of its domestic and secular nature.⁸

view, see Richard K. Garner, "Death and Victory in Euripides' *Alcestis*," CA 7 (1988) 58-59. Well-known poetic works based on Euripides' *Alcestis* are William Morris' *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70); Robert Browning's *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871); T.S. Eliot's verse play *The Cocktail Party* (first performed in 1949); and Thornton Wilder's *Alcesteiad* (1955).

⁶E.A.M.E. O'Connor-Visser, *Aspects of Human Sacrifice in the Tragedies of Euripides* (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner, 1987) 1-2. The plays which O'Connor-Visser selects for study are *Heraclidae*, *Hecuba*, *Erechtheus*, *Phoenissae*, and *IA*.

⁷The most recent discussions of this sort include Helene Foley, *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985); Claire Nancy, "φάρμακον σωτηρίας: Le mécanisme du sacrifice humain chez Euripide," *Théâtre et spectacle dans l'antiquité* (Leiden, 1983); Philip Vellacott, *Ironic Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), pp. 178-205, "Sacrifice for Victory." For an excellent summary of the major twentieth-century studies of human sacrifice in Euripides, see O'Connor-Visser (1987) 5-17.

⁸The distinction between Alcestis and other characters in Euripides who sacrifice themselves is developed by Lloyd (1985) 121-25. For a view emphasizing the similarities among the sacrifice plays of all three Greek tragedians, including Euripides' *Alcestis*, see Anne Pippin Burnett, *Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971) 26-28.

But I will be arguing that the *Alcestis* is the first of several Euripidean plays which feature the rhetoric of female self-destruction or self-sacrifice. I am interested less in the civic and religious aspects of self-sacrifice, which have been the traditional focus of study, and more in Euripides' portrayal of the causes and effects of female self-sacrifice.

Unlike Euripides' other plays of female self-sacrifice, the *Alcestis* does not contain a scene in which the heroine reaches the decision to be sacrificed. Instead, the prologue launches the audience *in medias res*: Apollo informs us that Alcestis, at an unspecified time in the past, agreed to die for her husband (17-18), and that today is the day appointed for her death (24-27). Scholarship has yet, I think, to find a satisfactory explanation for why Euripides presents Alcestis' offer to die as an event anterior to the play's opening action.⁹ A.M. Dale suggests: "In choosing to relegate the appeal, and Alcestis' response, to the antecedent incidents, Euripides has sacrificed the portrayal of her supreme moment of heroism."¹⁰ Scholars typically claim that

⁹I agree with Lloyd (1985) that this is "[o]ne of the most important features of Euripides' treatment of the story" (120). But Lloyd later argues that the play's principal intent is "an examination of how a man who has already accepted the sacrifice of his wife's life to save his own is to behave" (129). The focus of the play is indeed Admetus' behavior following his wife's offer to die and then after her actual death; I do not think, however, that Euripides intends Admetus to be seen as a model for how a man in such a situation is *supposed to behave*. My view is developed below.

¹⁰A.M. Dale, ed., *Euripides: "Alcestis"* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954) xvi. The use of the word "sacrificed" is curious. It implies that Euripides originally wanted to write such a scene, or that a scene like this was an indispensable part of the *Alcestis* legend. But the only known source for the legend before Euripides is Phrynichus' *Alcestis*, the one

Alcestis' offer to die was "heroic" or "admirable," without grounding their claims in the text of the play.¹¹ By treating the offer as an "antecedent incident," Euripides seems to me to suggest that it might *not* have been an act of "supreme heroism." Can we be sure that Alcestis was not forced into accepting death? And if she had been forced to die for her husband, would she still be considered heroic?

I would argue that by not dramatizing Alcestis' offer to die, Euripides pushes it into the background and asks us to consider it obliquely. We consequently base our opinion of her offer to die not on what she actually said at the time, but rather on *what is said about it* by various characters in the play, including Apollo, Admetus, the chorus, the slave woman, and finally Alcestis herself. *Society's response* to her offer to die is thus the primary focus of the play.

The manner in which Alcestis' offer is first presented at once creates the impression that Alcestis is, from the point of view of Apollo at least, a secondary figure next to her husband Admetus.¹² Her offer to die, when Apollo first

extant line of which fails even to mention Alcestis; on this see D.J. Conacher, *Euripides: "Alcestis"* (Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips, 1988) 31. Euripides' treatment of the Alcestis legend is evidently, in this respect, original; for discussion and bibliography see Eva M. Thury, "Euripides' *Alcestis* and the Athenian Generation Gap," *Arethusa* 21 (1988) 198.

¹¹Thus M. Dyson, "Alcestis' Children and the Character of Admetus," *JHS* 108 (1988) 13: "I shall take more or less for granted a view of which the main points are as follows: Alcestis loves Admetus and is wholly admirable...." But one cannot simply take a character's heroism for granted, a Euripidean character especially. One needs to argue for the view that he or she is presented as a hero; see, e.g., Garner (1988).

¹²I agree with Charles Rowan Beye in "Alcestis and Her Critics," *GRBS* 2 (1959) 122, that one effect of "limit[ing] the dramatic action to the day of [Alcestis'] death," is that it "strengthens definitely the position of Admetus...." However, I would add that it is from Apollo's

mentions it in the prologue of the play, appears a minor event compared to the difficulties experienced by Admetus in trying to find someone to die for him (15-18):

πάντας δ' ἐλέγξας καὶ διεξελθὼν φίλους,
πατέρα γεραιάν θ' ἢ σφ' ἔτικτε μητέρα,
οὐχ ἦῤυρε πλὴν γυναικὸς ὅστις ἤθελεν
θανῶν πρὸ κείνου μηκέτ' εἰσορᾶν φάος.

After testing and reviewing all his dear ones, his father and the aged mother who bore him, he did not find anyone who was willing to die for him and to see the light of day no longer, except his wife.¹³

Apollo emphasizes Admetus' failure to find someone willing to die for him, and adds the phrase "except his wife" almost parenthetically,¹⁴ because he is far less concerned with Alcestis than he is with Admetus, his excellent host. Apollo returns the favor of hospitality by enabling Admetus to evade death. At the end of the play, Admetus is again rewarded for his hospitality with the gift of life; only this time it is Alcestis who is brought back from the dead by Heracles. Yes, her restoration is *her husband's reward*, not her own.¹⁵ The

point of view that Admetus' position is strengthened, and not necessarily Euripides'.

¹³Passages from the *Alcestis* are quoted from J. Diggle, ed., *Euripidis Fabulae*, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984, repr. 1991). Unless otherwise noted all translations are my own.

¹⁴verse 16 was deleted by Dindorf, who felt that it was an inadequate apposition to the phrase in the line previous, πάντας φίλους. Diggle subsequently places the line within square brackets. Dale, adducing Alcestis as the third φίλος, restores the line ("nil mutandum," ad 16-17). Following Dale's text, I propose to read verse 16 as another parenthesis: Apollo exaggerates his friend Admetus' exhaustive search (line 15), but downplays the fact that the people Admetus actually approached were only his own parents (16) and wife (17).

¹⁵Garner (1988) suggests that Alcestis' return is presented in terms of an Olympic victory for Admetus.

focus remains, throughout the play, on Admetus and his special relationship with the gods.¹⁶

The offhand tone of Apollo's reference to Alcestis' offer to die suggests that he is not alone in regarding her husband Admetus of greater importance. By first presenting Alcestis' voice in indirect speech, Euripides raises the possibility that her words are controlled and edited by male "interpreters" on stage. The actual voice of Alcestis is heard in only one scene in the play. She is otherwise silent, while other characters speak either to her or about her. The chorus in fact mentions, after Alcestis dies on stage, that she will be *talked of* throughout the Greek world (453-54). The oral tradition thus will replace the living Alcestis, subjecting her words to still further editing, interpretation, and, Euripides suggests, the possibility of misinterpretation.

Admetus equates his wife's *offer to die* with the *will to die*, but I argue that Alcestis' own words suggest the opposite: that she does not actually *want* to die, but accepts death under compulsion. In what follows, I will compare *what Alcestis says* with *what is said or implied about her*; close attention will be paid to her style of speaking and to Admetus' role in influencing or changing her words. I will argue that our reading of Alcestis' offer to die should be

¹⁶Charles Segal aptly observes in "Euripides' *Alcestis*: Female Death and Male Tears," *CA* 11 no.1 (1992) 155: "[t]he play is called *Alcestis*, but the real center is Admetus, and the real concern," he adds, "is male rather than female experience."

based on what *she* says about life and death, but that our analysis of her voice is problematized by her husband's deliberate efforts to obstruct her words and finally to suppress the very fact of her death.¹⁷

Alcestis may speak in only one scene in the play, but in that scene her voice strikes two distinct chords. Just before she dies she sings a monody in which she describes her vision of death (244-72); at the end of this song, she pronounces herself dead and bids her children farewell (270-72). She seems to have spoken her final words. But immediately she revives and makes another long speech, a plainly spoken address in iambic trimeter to Admetus (280-325). The sudden change, after her apparent death, from the lyric mode to the iambic, is a problem debated by many scholars.

Dale suggests that the two passages, though different in form, are consistent in content. Tragic convention, Dale argues, allows a single experience to be expressed in two forms:

There are many scenes where a situation is realized first in its lyric, then in its iambic aspect--that is to say, first emotionally, then in its reasoned form. Where the latter appears as a development of the former, picking up and expounding for rhetorical conviction what

¹⁷Cf. Rosemary M. Nielsen, "Alcestis: A Paradox in Dying," *Ramus* 5 no.2 (1976) 94: "Suppression of the truth is one of the trademarks of this play; the truth comes out only for personal advantage or under extreme provocation."

passion had left only half-articulate...we accept the sequence as natural.¹⁸

This approach would certainly facilitate interpretation. If Alcestis' iambic speech were a translation of the previous moment's vision, then the monody would be less bewildering, less mystical, less lyrical, as it were. The critic would thus be relieved of the task of explaining the lyric utterance (which was "only half-articulate" to begin with), relying on Alcestis herself for exegesis.

Justina Gregory disagrees with Dale and offers a different solution to the problem: "[Alcestis'] change of mood violates at once emotional and chronological probability," writes Gregory, "and the discontinuity cannot be entirely attributed to the antinaturalistic conventions of Greek theater." According to Gregory, then, "[t]he dual death scene reinforces the play's thematic motifs," which in her interpretation is "the confusion of categories that follows upon Apollo's bargain with the Fates."¹⁹

I agree with Gregory that the alternating modes of Alcestis' speech are significant.²⁰ Her monody contrasts sharply not only with her own later iambs, but also with her husband's interruptions, which are also in iambs.

¹⁸Dale (1954) ad 280. Dale's view is supported by Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Alcestis: Character and Death," in *The Masks of Tragedy* (Austin, TX: U of Texas Press, 1963) 225: "[the lyric and iambic speeches] are not to be understood as following one another in empirical sequence. They present two sides of one and the same experience which, because of the exigencies of literary formulation, have to be developed independently."

¹⁹Justina Gregory, *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991) 32.

²⁰The contrast is also appreciated by Segal (1992) 143, who suggests that the variations in Alcestis' voice are used to illustrate "[t]he process of coming to terms with death."

Alcestis' monody is not simply an outburst of passion, I think, nor is the iambic speech that follows merely a gloss on it. The analysis which reads this scene as an example of reason opposing passion, fails to account for the more subtle differences between the two passages.

In the monody, Alcestis addresses the sun, daylight, clouds, earth, roof, and bridal chambers (244-47); later in the song she converses with Charon, the ferryman of the dead (253), and with "winged Hades" (262). Admetus and the chorus are present, but Alcestis seems not to see them, nor does she hear Admetus speaking to her.

The way in which Alcestis excludes Admetus at this juncture is worth close examination. He keeps trying to change the subject of her song from her suffering to his, while Alcestis consistently ignores him. He recontextualizes her words by picking up one that she has just spoken, and turning it into a complete sentence which gives the word a meaning entirely different from the one she originally gave it (244-47):

Al. Ἄλιε καὶ φῶς ἀμέρας,
οὐράνιαί τε δι-
ναι νεφέλας δρομαίου.

Ad. ὄρᾳ σε κάμει, δύο κακῶς πεπραγότας,
οὐδὲν θεοῦς δρᾶσαντας ἀνθ' ὅτου θανῆ.

Al. O Sun and light of day and heavenly whirls of
running cloud!

Ad. It sees you and me, two unfortunate people who have
done nothing to the gods for which you should die.

Admetus takes Alcestis' invocation of the sun as an opportunity to draw attention to himself. Though he borrows

the word "sun" from *Alcestis*, we note that he does not adopt the lyric mode, speaking instead in iambic trimeter, the mode of ordinary language.²¹ This suggests that a more fundamental distinction exists between him and *Alcestis*.²² By representing Admetus' language in the plain style, and *Alcestis*' in an elevated mode, Euripides may indicate a lack of genuine sympathy between husband and wife.²³

It is clear from this song that *Alcestis* is having a private vision: she sees Death coming for her, and looks at the sun in a unique way, since she is seeing it for the last time. Admetus sees the sun differently, for he is not about to lose sight of it forever. The solipsism of his wife's vision obviously disturbs him, though, and he tries to normalize her peculiar vision. She cries, "O sun!" like one about to be severed from the world; but Admetus rewrites her exclamation into a statement about a sun which sees them living and suffering together. By recontextualizing *Alcestis*'

²¹Aristotle *Poetics* 1449a24-27: "For the iambic is the most speakable of meters; proof of this is that we speak mostly iambs in conversation with each other, rarely hexameters...."

²²Noted also by Conacher (1988) ad 244-79: "The contrast between *Alcestis*' lyric verses and Admetus' spoken and then chanted ones serves to emphasize the psychic distance which, for all Admetus' attempts to bridge it, continues throughout *Alcestis*' monody."

²³By contrast, the sympathy between two characters is heightened when they address each other in lyric song. The example of this that will be discussed below is the song divided between Hecuba and Polyxena at *Hec.* 177-215. Singing with her mother, Polyxena reveals that she is terrified and reluctant to die; but in dialogue later with Odysseus, she calmly explains that she is willing to be sacrificed (342-78). These passages deserve comparison. In both plays, I think, Euripides uses the lyric mode to show that, if *Alcestis* and Polyxena were not under constraint, they would be unwilling to die. Meanwhile, their willingness to die is expressed in iambic trimeter, a confining verse form; this serves as a reminder that the "willing" victim is actually urged by necessity.

expression, Admetus censors not her words but her meaning. All of this is done without explicitly contradicting her, but by undermining the words from inside. In this case, it is not enough to say that Admetus "has the last word"; he *takes* it.

Admetus intrudes a second time into Alcestis' song. As she feels Death's grasp, she cries out, "What a journey I am utterly doomed to begin!" (οἶαν ὁδὸν ἄδει-λαισιότατα προβαίνω, 263). To ὁδόν Admetus attaches a statement of his own: "...grievous to your friends, to me and your children especially, since we share this pain" (οἰκτρὰν φίλοισιν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν μάλιστ' ἐμοί/ καὶ παισίν, οἷς δὴ πένθος ἐν κοινῷ τόδε, 264-65). Speaking again as if his addition (or *edition*) completed her thought, Admetus emphasizes his own anguish; the children may share it with him, he says, but the juxtaposition of μάλιστ' and ἐμοί, with the elision, may serve to underline ἐμοί.

Alcestis, however, pays no attention to Admetus, pitying the children instead (270-72):

τέκνα, τέκν', οὐκέτι δὴ
οὐκέτι μάτηρ σφῶν ἔστιν.
χαίροντες, ὦ τέκνα, τόδε φάος ὀρῶτον.

Children, o children, no longer, no longer is your mother alive! Farewell, o children, long may you enjoy this daylight.

Thus the song ends, an uninterrupted expression of pain and sadness. If we ask ourselves at this point whether Alcestis is a heroine bravely embracing death, the answer, I think,

would be negative.²⁴ In fact, she protests against Death: "What are you doing? Let go!" (τίρῆξαις; ἄφες, 263). Admetus tries to diffuse her meaning and detract attention away from her suffering, because her song testifies to her unwillingness to die. The monody does not show Alcestis in a particularly irrational state; she is not mad as, say, Orestes is in *Orestes*, Heracles in *Heracles Furens*, or Cassandra in *Agamemnon* and *Trojan Women*. But she is emotionally and verbally beyond the reach of Admetus; she may be intellectually resigned to die for him, but in other ways she is fighting him, just as she fights Death.

By contrast, Alcestis addresses Admetus in the following speech in a controlled mode. The form of her speech is now iambic trimeter, the sentences are complete, and in this speech, addressed to Admetus directly (280), Alcestis appears resigned to die. It is significant, I think, that the lyric utterance excludes Admetus, while that which is spoken in ordinary meter appeals specifically to him.

In the previous song, Alcestis spoke in an idiosyncratic style (seen by us as lyric) to describe the apparitions that only she could see. What follows is ordinary in form and content. Alcestis argues that Admetus must not remarry, a favor which she says he owes to her not because of their love

²⁴But there is reluctance on the part of some scholars to pursue the question at this point in the play. "It is true," observes Lloyd (1985) 121, "that Alcestis seems less enthusiastic than Euripides' other self-sacrificing characters....," but the matter is left there.

for each other, but because it is fair (δίκαια), and because they both love the children (299-303):

εἶέν· σύ νύν μοι τῶνδ' ἀπόμνησαι χάριν·
 αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ' ἀξίαν μὲν οὔποτε
 (ψυχῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι τιμιώτερον)
 δίκαια δ', ὡς φήσεις σύ· τούσδε γὰρ φιλεῖς
 οὐχ ἥσσον ἢ ἴγ' αἰδῶ παίδας, εἴπερ εὖ φρονεῖς.

Very well. Keep in mind the favor you owe me in return. For what I will ask you (though it will never pay me back; since nothing is more valuable than life) is fair, as you will agree yourself. For you love these children no less than I do, if you are right-minded.

Alcestis' resignation is implicit in the dismissive tone of εἶέν, "very well." Her resigned state is moreover apparent in the distinction drawn between ἀξία and δίκαια: she accepts the fact that she loses more than she gets, and is reconciled to asking for the type of favor that even her husband will agree is fair. In other words, she is conforming to socially accepted standards of "fairness," suppressing her genuine desire to live (which does not mean the desire is not there), and considering the future needs of her children. As her lyric voice was associated with resistance to both death and Admetus, so her iambic voice is used to express the fact that she is nevertheless resigned to both of them, death and Admetus.

I would contrast Alcestis' submission to accepted notions of "fairness" with Pheres' repudiation of those notions. Everyone in the play disapproves of Pheres (as do several critics) because of his refusal, against all social

expectations, to die for his son.²⁵ Pheres tries to reason with Admetus: "You enjoy seeing the light; do you think your father does not enjoy it?" (χαίρεις ὄρων φῶς· πατέρα δ' οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς; 691). It is clear that Pheres and Alcestis derive their definitions of what is right very differently. Pheres argues that reason does not require him to die in his son's place; his conclusion is based on the evidence of personal experience: "if you love your life, everyone else loves theirs" (703-04). Meanwhile Alcestis claims that it was wrong for Pheres and his wife to refuse their son's request; her conclusion is based on the argument that at their age it is καλόν for them to die: "They had reached the time of life when it is both proper for them to die, and proper to save their son and die with a good reputation" (291-92).

What Pheres wants and what he thinks is right are in agreement: he wants to live, that is, and believes that it is right for him not to die for his son. But what Alcestis wants is in conflict with what she thinks is right: like Pheres, she does not want to die; this much was apparent in her monody, sung without constraint and without regard for either Admetus or public opinion. Yet she truly believes

²⁵See Conacher (1988) ad 734-38: "No one likes Pheres"; and Dyson (1988) 21: "Pheres is unheroic and self-centred," though "not all bad." My reading of Pheres is compatible with Beye's (1959). According to Beye, Pheres is "a practical man"; his "realistic discussion has forced a measure of rationality on the son," Beye writes, and "[t]he cool and ~~expressed~~ ~~tone~~ of his speech in part dispels the heavy emotion that has been earlier accumulating" (119). Beye concludes, "In a situation peopled essentially with shabby characters, Pheres hardly seems conspicuously evil" (121). For Beye's strong critical look at the scholars who "feel contempt for Pheres," see 120 n.15.

that she must die. "Admetus," she says, "you see the situation I am in," referring to the fact that she is dying ("Αδμηθ', ὀρῶς γὰρ τὰ μὰ πρόγμαθ' ὡς ἔχει, 280). It was possible for her to live, she adds (παρόν μοι μὴ θανεῖν, 284). "But," she continues, "some god made events come out this way" (ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν/θεῶν τις ἐξέπραξεν ὥσθ' οὕτως ἔχειν, 297-98). Alcestis here acknowledges that her death is compelled by necessity, by "some god." But this circumstance is ignored by her husband, the very person who asked her to die, and who now pretends that Alcestis chose to die of her own free will. In the last moments of Alcestis' life he begs her, "Lift your face! Don't leave your children!" (ὄρθου πρόσωπον, μὴ λίπης παῖδας σέθεν, 388).²⁶ Alcestis underscores for the last time, *It is not because I want to* (οὐ δῆθ' ἐκούσά γ', 389).

The opening of the play may not explain the exact circumstances surrounding Alcestis' offer to die, but her dying words give us reason to believe that her willingness to die was in some sense coerced.²⁷ This is an uncomfortable interpretation because it implies forced consent, a paradoxical notion. How are we to judge an act that is

²⁶As Lloyd (1985) 125, observes, throughout the play Admetus "uses the standard language of lament." But Lloyd defends Admetus' use of conventional language ("how else is he to react?" Lloyd asks). I would argue that Admetus loses the right to mourn his wife in the normal fashion by asking her to die for him. His "conventional" response to Alcestis can only sound reproachful and painfully inappropriate. Cf. Nielsen (1976) 95: "It is unrealistic to expect anything but insensitive behavior. There is no time for modesty or polite euphemism when the alternatives of life and death must be weighed out in plain sight of all."

²⁷Alcestis' death was "fraudulently manipulated," writes Nielsen (1976) 93. To be sure, the tone of the play is set in the prologue, where Apollo openly owns up to his sly manipulation of the Fates (12).

motivated by such conflicting impulses? Do we admire Alcestis because she is willing to die, or pity her because she is forced to? Either way it seems impossible to idealize her without qualification, as Justina Gregory observes:

Just as Alcestis is perceived simultaneously as alive and dead, so her act is adjudged simultaneously voluntary and involuntary, and this double vision has the effect of robbing Alcestis of her unique glory. If making a virtue of necessity enhances many a sacrificial heroine (Polyxena in the *Hecuba*, for instance), making a necessity of virtue can only have the opposite effect.²⁸

Yet with only one exception, every character in the play does in fact idealize Alcestis without reservation. Her one detractor is, predictably, Pheres. He alone sees Alcestis with a "double vision," which means that he does not believe that she is exclusively good. When Pheres comes to visit his son after Alcestis' funeral, he at first repeats the platitudes that were already voiced by the chorus: Alcestis was "good" and "chaste" (615), he says, and her corpse is "worthy of honor" (619). But Admetus repudiates his father's conciliatory gestures and begins to insult him. Rising to his own defense, Pheres uncovers his true opinion of Alcestis: she was, he admits, "not shameless," οὐκ ἀναιδής; but, Pheres adds, Admetus took advantage of the fact that Alcestis also was "foolish," ἄφρων (ἦδ' οὐκ ἀναιδής· τήνδ' ἐφηῦρες ἄφρονα, 728).²⁹

²⁸Gregory (1991) 30.

²⁹An interesting reading of Pheres' speech is found in Nielsen (1976) 98. The agon between Pheres and Admetus is studied in terms of Greek law and customs in Thury (1988) 197-214.

This bald statement is yet another reason for Pheres' unpopularity both in the play and among scholars.³⁰ As I mentioned before, everyone but Pheres glamorizes Alcestis as the ideal woman. The phrase most often used in the play to describe her is γυνή ἀρίστη, "best woman" or "best wife." Even before she is dead, the chorus of old men from Pherae affirm that she is "by far the best woman under the sun" (γυνή τ' ἀρίστη τῶν ὑφ' ἡλίῳ μακρῶ, 151). The slave woman who serves Alcestis agrees rather impatiently, "Of course she is the best. Who will deny it?" (πῶς δ' οὐκ ἀρίστη; τίς δ' ἐναντιώσεται; 152). Alcestis herself tells Admetus to boast that he had the best wife, and the children that they had the best mother (καὶ σοὶ μὲν, πόσι/ γυναῖκ' ἀρίστην ἔστι κομπάσαι λαβεῖν,/ ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, μητρὸς ἐκπεφυκέναι, 323-25). On what, though, does Alcestis base her opinion of herself? It seems never to occur to the other characters, but she might in fact pride herself not only on her willingness to do what her husband asks of her, but also on her record as a wife and mother even before she was asked to die.

One consequence of associating Alcestis' excellence exclusively with her offer to die is the definition of female excellence that this implies.³¹ Alcestis appears to set a

³⁰Beye (1959) 120-21, suggests that beneath the scholarly criticism written against Pheres "lurks the rigorous denial of any adverse criticism of Alcestis or her death which would upset the common conception of the play and her position therein."

³¹The distinction between male and female excellence is implicit in the structure of the play: Admetus' virtue is shown by his hospitality to gods and heroes, Alcestis' by her consent to die for her husband. A further distinction is suggested by Garner (1988) 65; Euripides may implicitly associate Alcestis with Hector in the *Iliad*, writes Garner,

precedent in her society. The slave woman, for one, concludes from the experience that a wife shows her respect for her husband by sacrificing herself to him: "How could anyone better show honor toward her husband," she asks, "than by dying willingly for him?" (πῶς δ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἐνδείξαιτό τις/ πόσιν προτιμῶσ' ἢ θέλουσ' ὑπερθανεῖν; 154-55).³² Alcestis moreover becomes for the chorus the standard by which to measure all women and, ultimately, to find fault with them. The idealization of Alcestis thus leads to the condemnation of all women (or wives) who do not sacrifice themselves for their husbands. The chorus wish for a wife like Alcestis, and implicitly scorn women who are unlike her (472-75):

τοιούτας εἴη μοι κῦρσαι
 συνδυάδος φιλίας ἀλόχου· τὸ γὰρ
 ἐν βίῳ σπάνιον μέρος· ἦ γὰρ ἂν
 ἔμοιγ' ἄλυπος δι' αἰ-
 ῶνος ἂν ξυνείη.

I hope to find such a married love. For this is a rare lot in life; I do surely hope to be with a woman who gives no pain as long as she is alive.

One could imagine that Semonides of Amorgos cherished a comparable wish, but he was one poet speaking in the voice of one man. The chorus, however, are characters in a tragedy, and this means that what they say cannot be dismissed as a poetic commonplace. Their wish, though traditional in Greek poetry, is here situated in the context of a society. The

but the association "points to suggestive differences between man and woman": Hector wins fame by killing a man (*Il.*7.84-91), Alcestis by dying for one.

³²Cf. Nielsen (1976) 96: "Prior to the queen's entrance, we learn from the handmaid how fundamentally Alcestis has revolutionized the obligations required of a wife."

men represent not the opinion of just one individual, but of a collective group.

What does Euripides think about this response? Is there anything wrong with men idealizing one type of woman--the type of woman who would die for her husband? Well, Euripides seems to say, the obvious problem with this attitude is that the woman so idealized is *dead*, either *literally dead*, or alive but unresponsive, and therefore *virtually dead*. This is ideal from no one's perspective, male or female.

For Admetus, the fact that his ideal wife is a dead woman means a life of seclusion from all young women, and devotion to the image of the dead one, Alcestis. We are unable to say how Admetus might have felt toward his wife before she agreed to die for him. Another effect of the play's opening *in medias res* is our uncertainty on this point. According to the slave woman in the palace, though, Admetus does not truly appreciate Alcestis until he loses her (οὐπω τόδ' οἶδε δεσπότης, πρὶν ἄν πάθῃ, 145). But the only difference that we can mark for certain between his former feeling for Alcestis and how he feels toward her now, is that his feelings now are for a woman who is dead and incapable of response. Evidently, her response is not essential, at least as far as Admetus is concerned. He vowed before she died that he would never remarry, and (without her prompting) that he would keep in his bed a model of her body constructed by artists (348-54):

σοφῆ δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν
 εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται,
 ὃ προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσω χέρας
 ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
 δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν·
 ψυχρὰν μὲν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως βάρος
 ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν.

A copy of your body made by the skilled hand of craftsmen will be stretched out in my bed, which I will fall upon, embrace and, calling your name, think that I am holding my dear wife in my arms, though I am not. A cold pleasure, I suppose, but it will stop the flood of sorrows in my soul.

The words "calling your name" highlight the fact that speech is his prerogative only; Alcestis, since she is dead, may not call out *his* name. Her name and the statue are objects which represent what Admetus loves, but what does he actually love?

At a point after Alcestis' death, Admetus specifies that he loves the dead: "I envy the dead, I am in love with them. I want to live in their house" (ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι./ κείν' ἐπιθυμῶ δῶματα ναίειν, 866-67). Both ἔραμαι and ἐπιθυμῶ have sexual connotations that suggest a range of meanings. On one level, Admetus' expression is simply a peculiar way of saying that he wants to die. This is remarkable enough considering his previous decision not to die. On another level, though, this wording gives us the grotesque impression that Admetus is actually in love with a dead woman. Perhaps these two meanings are connected. For now Admetus wants to die, but earlier he did not. Now he also desires his wife: did he not desire her before? Her death is said to prove to the world that she is the best of women ("Ἀλκηστις, ἐμοὶ πᾶσι τ' ἀρίστη/

δόξασα γυνή, 83-84). Does it also prove to Admetus that she is a sexually desirable one?

In the *Alcestis* Euripides broaches the topic of female self-sacrifice for the first time, and foregrounds not the heroine's actual offer to die, but her ambivalent feelings as death approaches, and the responses her offer produces in society at large, and in her husband in particular.³³ The most general response is to idealize Alcestis as the perfect woman or wife (γυνή means both). Euripides endows Admetus with more particular feelings and interests: he bans all music from the city for a year (430-31) and plans to avoid the company of women who are the same age as Alcestis (952-53). He wants to die (πῶς ἄν ὀλοίμην; 864), especially so that he may lie with Alcestis in the grave (897-99), and live with her in Hades (363-64).³⁴ Her death, it appears, has changed his way of living and loving forever.

But in one important way Admetus is unaltered: he is still a good host. Hospitality is the virtue for which Apollo praises Admetus at the beginning of the play (10). Alcestis ultimately suffers the consequences of her husband's virtue, for when Apollo returns his host's favor, he opens up the possibility of Alcestis' dying in Admetus' place. Admetus'

³³Cf. Dyson (1988) 18-23.

³⁴Segal (1992) 145, duly observes that Admetus' wish resembles the wife's wish, conventional in Greek tragedy, to die with her husband, referring us to the suicides of Evadne (*Supp.*) and Deianira (*Sophocles' Trachiniae*). But Segal fails to comment on the fact that Admetus merely evokes the conventional language of female grief; that unlike Evadne and Deianira, he does not in fact die, but lives happily ever after. This irony should not be overlooked.

hospitality is thus the reason why Alcestis falls silent and dies in the middle of the play. Admetus' virtue is responsible for still other kinds of silence affecting Alcestis in the play.

It was noted that Admetus intends to make everyone in the land mourn for Alcestis: all Thessalians are ordered to wear black and to cut their hair; the playing of flutes and lyres in the city is explicitly forbidden for a year (425-31). It seems that Admetus wants to observe Alcestis' death as publicly as possible. Yet when Heracles arrives as a guest at the palace, stopping over for the night on route to his next labor, Admetus hides from him the fact that Alcestis is dead. His grief, however, is visible: "Why are you weeping?" Heracles asks Admetus, "Which of your dear ones is dead?" (τί δῆτα κλαίεις; τίς φίλων ὁ καθανών; 530). Admetus answers only, "A woman" (γυνή, 531), not specifying his wife. Thus, while Admetus may make his grief a public matter, he guards Alcestis' death in secret. So far the κλέος that was promised to Alcestis is off to a shaky start.³⁵ Didn't the chorus say that, after her death, Alcestis would be celebrated far and wide? (445-54) It is suddenly clear why Admetus has banned music in Thessaly: as suggested by Dolores O'Higgins, "[Admetus'] abstinence from song may betoken more than grief; his wife's *kleos* has been earned at his expense and

³⁵"Admetus prevaricates, initiating his wife's posthumous *kleos* with a paradox--he explains that Alcestis both exists and does not exist, having promised to die for her husband; and those about to die might as well be dead," Dolores O'Higgins, "Above Rubies: Admetus' Perfect Wife," *Arethusa* 26 no.1 (1993) 83.

commemorative poetry will not redound to his credit."³⁶ By silencing the flutes and lyres, Admetus makes it impossible to publish Alcestis' story anywhere in his kingdom.

But later that night, one of the palace slaves tells Heracles that Alcestis is dead (821). The news stuns Heracles, though not because of what it says about Alcestis. He is moved instead by Admetus' generous nature and good motives: "He hid [her death] because he is noble, and he reveres me" (857). Heracles feels that to return the favor (Ἀδμήτωθ' ὑπουργῆσαι χάριν) he must restore Alcestis to life (840-42).

The favor that Heracles does for Admetus is highly appropriate to the one that he received from him. Admetus honored Heracles by veiling Alcestis' death, or by keeping it silent; in return, Heracles presents Admetus with a veiled and silent woman who turns out, of course, to be Alcestis herself, brought back from Hades. This hidden and voiceless woman is, I think, an ironic representation of Admetus' conception of the ideal wife: a silent body that can be named but cannot speak, much like the statue that he earlier promised to keep in his bed.³⁷

³⁶O'Higgins (1993) 83. See also Beye (1959) 115 and Segal (1992) 145.

³⁷Alcestis' silence says something different to everyone. G.M.A. Grube, in *The Drama of Euripides* (London: Methuen and Co., 1941) 145, writes that "the dramatic reason [for her silence] is [that] she could not say anything without spoiling in retrospect the beautiful effect of her death-scene." I disagree with Grube since I do not think that Alcestis' death is "beautiful" (cf. Dyson [1988] 18: "this most beautiful silence"). For other interpretations, see O'Higgins (1993) 95; Segal (1992) 155, 157, and for further bibliography, 155 n.39; Erna P. Trammell, "The Mute Alcestis," *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Euripides' "Alcestis"* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968) 85-

Problems associated with Alcestis' voice persist throughout the play: Apollo speaks for her in the prologue; Admetus distorts the words she sings before she dies; her voice ultimately falls silent in death, and she maintains this silence even when she has been brought back to life. Admetus rejoices to have his wife back, and though he asks Heracles why she cannot speak, her silence ("the ominous silence of death," writes Charles Segal³⁸) does not diminish his happiness.³⁹ His spirits are raised simply by the presence of his wife's body.

Yet it is the very sound of Alcestis' voice that inspires love in the palace slaves. The slave woman tells us that before she died, Alcestis spoke to each one of them: "No slave was so mean that she did not address him and have him speak to her in return" (κούτις ἦν οὕτω κακὸς/ ὃν οὐ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν, 194-95). It is important to the slave woman that Alcestis both spoke to each slave and listened to each one's response.

Why is Alcestis able to converse with the palace slaves, but not with Admetus? The answer, I think, has to do with Alcestis' status as a woman. She may be the queen, but because she is a woman, she is associated more closely with

91; Beye (1959) 127. For the view that the play's conclusion is "rich in ironies," see Edward M. Bradley, "Admetus and the Triumph of Failure in the *Alcestis*," *Ramus* 9 no.2 (1980) 125-26.

³⁸Segal (1992) 157.

³⁹Alcestis' silence could also be read as an implicit accusation of Admetus, one which he, however, fails to understand. We might compare Dido's silent reception of Aeneas in the underworld (*Aeneid* 6.467-76). Aeneas at least feels chastised by the silent shade, and thus he weeps. The silence of Alcestis, on the other hand, is wasted on Admetus.

the slaves than with free men. There is evidence in the play that Alcestis herself resents the subordinate position of women in society. It is not on her own behalf that she objects to society's treatment of women, but on behalf of her daughter whom she pities more than her son because, as she says, a daughter is cut off from her father (311-313)

καὶ παῖς μὲν ἄρσιν πατέρ' ἔχει πύργον μέγαν,
[ὄν καὶ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν.]
σὺ δ', ὦ τέκνον μοι, πῶς κορευθήσῃ καλῶς;

A son's father is like a great citadel: [he speaks to him and is answered in return.] But you, my daughter, how will you reach maidenhood properly?

Line 312 repeats almost exactly what the slave woman said about Alcestis, "speaking to and being answered by" each of the slaves in the palace. In its later position, however, the line is spoken by Alcestis herself, and accentuates the undemocratic, exclusive nature of dialogue between and among men.

Though line 312 is contained in the manuscripts, Pierson deletes it, and thus Diggle surrounds it with square brackets.⁴⁰ But if we reject line 312, in effect we silence Alcestis and censor the play's most explicit statement about the importance of free speech.⁴¹

⁴⁰Dale (1954) ad 312, calls the line "a peculiarly senseless example of the adscript," i.e. of the scribal practice of writing parallel passages in the margins of a text.

⁴¹The scholium ad 312 reads: "A male child is able to help himself; for he enjoys the privilege of free speech with his father."

There are some plausible arguments for its deletion.⁴² Assuming it was interpolated by a later hand, it nevertheless serves as an important reading of the rest of the passage. In lines 311 and 313-14, Alcestis implies that girls and women are at a disadvantage in the world because they do not have free access to their fathers. Line 312, whether interpolated or original, associates the male's advantage and the father's power with speech. This association is central to the play, especially to the scene in which Admetus overpowers Alcestis' speech.

It is, even without line 312, surprising to find Alcestis sounding resentful of male privileges, because nowhere else in the play does she seem to notice that her husband enjoys certain advantages (his connections with Apollo and the greater longevity this brings him) that she does not. She is able to make such a statement only when she considers her daughter's situation. In this respect Alcestis is the precursor to Euripides' later portrayals of Hecuba and Clytemnestra, both mothers who, as later discussion will show, do not hesitate to fight against the male establishment when their daughters' lives are at stake. But Alcestis' acceptance of her own sacrifice also anticipates the resignation of the daughters in these plays, Polyxena and Iphigenia, who ultimately turn away from their mothers and, by embracing death, satisfy male expectations of them. In

⁴²On the repetition of lines in Greek tragedy, see Denys L. Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (NY and London: Garland, repr. 1987) 103-105.

these respects we can see that the *Alcestis*, Euripides' first play about female self-sacrifice, is a true ancestor of the plays that follow.

Heraclidae

Scholars since at least the nineteenth century have argued that the received text of the *Heraclidae* is not the play that Euripides originally wrote and produced in fifth-century Athens. In this play the daughter of Heracles (whose very name is apocryphal, but let us call her, with tradition, Macaria⁴³) offers to serve her family and Athens as a sacrificial victim. But her sacrifice--the death, that is--is not described or even mentioned in the play after her exit at line 607.⁴⁴ Several critics object to the text's apparent failure to describe Macaria's death and the reaction of the other characters to it.⁴⁵ Because of these perceived flaws in

⁴³The daughter of Heracles is never referred to by name in the text of the play, but is named Macaria in the play's hypothesis. Nor can we consult with earlier tradition on this point since it is in *Hclid.* that the sacrifice of a daughter of Heracles is first mentioned (John Wilkins, *Euripides: "Heraclidae"* [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1933] xvi). Euripides may have invented it.

⁴⁴Some scholars read vss. 819-22 as a reference to the sacrifice of Macaria before the battle against Eurystheus. In these lines, according to ms. L, a messenger describes the cutting of "human throats," for which the emendation has been proposed, "the throats of oxen," which Diggle has adopted. In this matter I agree with O'Connor-Visser (1987) 41-42, that for this line to refer to Macaria's death "would be too callous to be credible."

⁴⁵The lack of emotional response to Macaria's sacrifice was first felt by Hermann in 1824, who consequently supposed a lacuna at the end of the play; Kirchoff and Nauck moved the suppositious lacuna to the middle of the play, following Macaria's exit; Wilamowitz's 1882 essay (to be discussed below) finally gave the theory of the "mutilated" text its

the text's presentation of both the sacrifice itself and its reception within the play, many critics argue that our text of the *Heraclidae* is either a "mutilated" or "revised" version of the play that Euripides originally wrote.⁴⁶

But I will argue that the received text of the play is, in fact, entirely the work of Euripides. My method of argumentation will not involve speculation about scenes that may or may not belong to the "original" text of Euripides' play. Instead I propose to study the text's meaning by examining the *critical texts* that it has produced. Since I am interested in *responses* to the offer of female self-sacrifice, I am intrigued that scholars routinely respond to the *Heraclidae* by suggesting that the text itself is mutilated. The exposition of the mutilated text in the critical arena has been, I think, called forth as compensation for the perceived failure of the text itself to describe and celebrate the mutilation of Macaria's body.

Critics often describe the way in which the action of the *Heraclidae* ought to proceed, deriving their critical assumptions from the play's hypothesis, and from their familiarity (through reading the *Hecuba* and the *IA*) with

fullest treatment. For a thorough history of the textual criticism on the play, see O'Connor-Visser (1987) 32-43.

⁴⁶In his prefatory note to the 1984 (repr. 1991) Oxford edition of the play, J. Diggle suggests that this view is common, but not one to which he personally subscribes ("mutilam esse vel ab homine scaenico retractatam [sc. fabulam] sunt qui credant; mihi secus persuasum est"). In the earlier Oxford edition (1902, repr. 1958) Gilbert Murray indicates a large lacuna after v.629 and v.1053, citing Hermann, Kirchoff, and Wilamowitz. Most recently, John Wilkins (1993) doubts a lacuna exists at 629; but, he writes, "a lacuna after 1052 is more likely" (xxvii-xxx).

scenes of virgin self-sacrifice presented by Euripides. I will deal with problems related to the play's hypothesis first. An ancient hypothesis might be considered a reliable authority. The hypothesis of the *Heraclidae*, however, disagrees on several points with the received text of the play.⁴⁷ It begins by telling us that Iolaus, who as a young man had assisted the hero Heracles in his labors, is now the aged guardian of Heracles' orphaned children (ἐν γήρα τοῖς ἐξ ἐκείνου βοηθὸς εὐνους παρέστη, 2-3). Heracles' archenemy Eurystheus has driven the children and Iolaus from every Greek city they have fled to. The play (according to the hypothesis) opens with the fugitives newly arrived at Athens, asking the Athenian leader, Demophon, for protection. Demophon grants them sanctuary, undeterred by threats made by Eurystheus through his messenger, Kopreus. In preparation for the impending confrontation with the army of Eurystheus, Demophon consults the oracles, and is assured of victory on one condition: ἐὰν Δήμητρι τὴν εὐγενεστάτην παρθένον σφάξῃ: "if he sacrifices the noblest virgin to Demeter" (9-10). This statement points to a discrepancy between the hypothesis and the text of the play, since the latter states that the requisite virgin is to be sacrificed to Demeter's daughter, Persephone, not to Demeter herself (*Hclld.* 408-09). The hypothesis continues: Demophon is unwilling to ask an Athenian citizen to sacrifice a daughter on the suppliants'

⁴⁷For discussion of the hypothesis see O'Connor-Visser (1987) 35-39, and Günther Zuntz, "Is the *Heraclidae* Mutilated?" *CQ* 41 (1947) 48-49.

behalf. At this juncture, one of Heracles' daughters, whose name is given as Macaria, volunteers to die (μία τῶν Ἡρακλέους παίδων Μακαρία τὸν θάνατον ἑκουσίως ὑπέστη, 12-13). The following scene, according to the hypothesis, dramatizes the principal characters' response to Macaria's death: ταύτην μὲν οὖν εὐγενῶς ἀποθανοῦσαν ἐτίμησαν, αὐτοὶ δὲ τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπιγνόντες παρόντας εἰς τὴν μάχην ὤρμησαν ("They honored the girl who died nobly, and then, discovering the enemy at hand, rushed into battle," 14-15).

This statement leads one to expect a scene in the play depicting the glorification of Macaria after her death. Many critics argue that Macaria is not sufficiently honored in the *Heraclidae*, at least not in the way promised by the hypothesis, and that we expect (Wilamowitz says "wir verlangen") a scene of lamentation or celebration featuring the chorus or Macaria's grandmother Alcmene.⁴⁸ As a result, both the accuracy of the hypothesis and the integrity of the play have been disputed.

The critics' misgivings about the text are other times based on comparisons between Macaria's sacrifice in the *Heraclidae* and the sacrifice of Polyxena in the *Hecuba* and of Iphigenia in the *IA*. This is the method of textual criticism employed by Wilamowitz, for example, to justify his objection to the plain style of Macaria's final stage exit: "Jeder

⁴⁸U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, "Excuse zu Euripides *Herakliden*," *Hermes* 17 (1882) 342: "wir verlangen, dass der Chor die Jungfrau nun auch wirklich verherrliche"; A. Kirchoff, *Euripidis Tragoediae* (Berlin: 1867-68): "Post hunc verum [sc.629] multa desunt. Macariae narratio et Alcmeneae matris lamentationes cum chori cantico integro..." (Quoted in O'Connor-Visser [1987] 33).

Leser, der das Scheiden der Heraklestochter mit den Parallelfiguren Polyxena und Iphigeneia vergleicht, empfindet, dass hier die Grösse der Selbstaufopferung ungleich schwächer hervortritt." In an essay published in this country nearly fifty years later, John McLean adopts Wilamowitz's method of analysis in order to reach essentially the same conclusion: that the unexalted style of Macaria's exit compares unfavorably with the high style of Polyxena's and Iphigenia's; as they move offstage, "Polyxena and Iphigenia cannot just speak," McLean observes; "they must sing...Yet Macaria calmly talks herself to death in iambic trimeters."⁴⁹

These two critics--Wilamowitz in the nineteenth century and McLean in the twentieth--are the two most vocal revisers of the play. But while McLean's essay readily exposes itself as the sort of jaundiced thinking that, one hopes, will not attract serious followers (he considers the Macaria-scene "a positive nuisance," and Macaria herself "a bit of a prig"),⁵⁰ Wilamowitz's 1882 essay (a clear source for McLean's) has been extremely influential in the field of Euripidean scholarship. In 1955, Günther Zuntz noted with regret that Wilamowitz effectively "stopped the process of the interpretation [of the *Heraclidae*] by asserting that this play survives only in a mutilated and interpolated text."⁵¹

⁴⁹John McLean, "The *Heraclidae* of Euripides," *AJP* 55 (1934) 197-224; p.205 on the comparison with Polyxena and Iphigenia.

⁵⁰McLean (1934) 212, 206.

⁵¹Günther Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1955) ix.

Albin Lesky's view in *Greek Tragedy* (first published in 1964 and reprinted in 1967) testifies to the lasting influence of Wilamowitz's essay. According to Lesky, "We cannot help suspecting that *The Heracleidae*, which with its 1055 lines is the shortest of the Euripidean tragedies, was adapted to its present form in the fourth century, although attempts have recently been made to disprove this."⁵²

The theory (which Lesky supports because he "cannot help" it) that Euripides' *Heraclidae* was shortened to its present form sometime in the century following the death of Euripides, is the same view that Wilamowitz first proposed in the 1882 essay. Wilamowitz's essay further argues that the alleged fourth-century producer revised other portions of the play in order to compensate for the omission of the scene devoted to Macaria's sacrifice. But these revisions, Wilamowitz asserts, fail to cover up the fact that something is missing from the text of the play.⁵³

If the presentation of Macaria's sacrifice in the *Heraclidae* fails to satisfy the reader's desire for completion, then we might begin our discussion of the play by asking what, in fact, readers require from the text in order to feel satisfied. In what way is the reader's desire for completion aroused and manipulated by the text itself? In

⁵²Albin Lesky, *Greek Tragedy*, tr. H.A. Frankfort (NY: Barnes and Noble, 1964, repr. 1967) 148.

⁵³Wilamowitz (1882) 340: "Der Bearbeiter hat ein Episodion gestrichen und den folgenden Theil des Dramas so weit umgeformt, dass er die Lücke nothdürftig verdeckte."

other words, if there were no apparent "guide" to the *Heraclidae* (such as the hypothesis, or the *Hecuba* and the *IA*), would the critics still feel the absence of narrative describing Macaria's death or the lack of response celebrating it?

Let us first ask these questions of Wilamowitz. He and his followers are dissatisfied with the present state of the text, and insist upon revising or re-presenting it as the site of textual violence and mutilation. Instead of looking for the artistic design behind the play's unorthodoxies, they choose to violate the integrity of the text themselves by presenting it to the world as cut, torn, and mutilated.⁵⁴ According to Wilamowitz, "every reader" discovers "dass in der Mitte die Handlung zerreisst."⁵⁵ Following Wilamowitz, Page claims that fourth-century revisers "cut out a scene in which the death of Makaria was reported," and that "this excision" entailed subsequent changes in the play's structure.⁵⁶ McLean suggests a slightly different theory. While he agrees with Wilamowitz that the play is "sorely mutilated," in his view it has been altered by the *addition*, not the subtraction, of the Macaria scene, which McLean himself then wishes to "expunge." "What we have left of the

⁵⁴Zuntz (1947) 51, likewise comments on scholarship's failure to seek "another explanation of the peculiar features of the Macaria scene...", adding that, to Kirchoff and Wilamowitz, "the 'mutilation' of the drama was a point of dogma."

⁵⁵Wilamowitz (1882) 338.

⁵⁶Denys L. Page, *Actors Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1934) 38.

play," he concludes, "after we have separated the chaff from the grain" is the genuine work of Euripides.⁵⁷

Evidently the desire for "completion" or "wholeness" leads some readers to envision textual mutilation precisely at a point in the text where the physical mutilation of the heroine (which has been promised to them) is, they feel, notably missing. I would argue that the text itself, by eliciting this response, uncannily reproduces in the audience, or in the critical arena, the same desire for mutilation that motivates Macaria's self-sacrifice in the plot of the *Heraclidae*.⁵⁸

In the play, Macaria's offer to die is prompted by oracular interpretation. The oracles' predictions regarding Athenian victory are inconsistent, but they agree on one detail, that a noble girl must be sacrificed (406-09):

καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων διάφορ' ἐστὶ θεσφάτοις
 πόλλ'. ἔν δὲ πᾶσι γνῶμα ταύτῳ ἐμπρέπει·
 σφάξαι κελεύουσίν με παρθένον κόρη
 Δῆμητρος, ἥτις ἐστὶ πατρὸς εὐγενοῦς...

The oracles had many differences among themselves; but one reading is agreed on by them all: they order me to sacrifice to Demeter's daughter a virgin born of a noble father ...

⁵⁷McLean (1934) 224, 209, 224.

⁵⁸In working out the connection between the text and its critical reception throughout this dissertation but with regard especially to the *Heraclidae*, I have found support for some of my ideas in Shoshana Felman's essay "Turning the Screw of Interpretation," in *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Shoshana Felman (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982) 94-207. Looking at critical reception of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, Felman argues that "The scene of the critical debate is...a repetition of the scene dramatized in the text. The critical interpretation, in other words, not only elucidates the text but also reproduces it dramatically, unwittingly participates in it. Through its very reading, the text, so to speak, acts itself out" (101). I am grateful to Joanna Spiro for bringing this essay to my attention.

Similarly, critics in the century after Wilamowitz's essay agree almost unanimously that mutilation of the play is necessary for its success or "completion." In my opinion, the central subject of the *Heraclidae*, especially evident as we read the play in the context of such a critical history, is not female self-sacrifice, but the *male fantasy of female self-sacrifice and mutilation*. The *text*, then, is not mutilated at all, although for some readers, *the play itself* is not essentially over until a mutilation is enacted in the text.

The *Heraclidae* produces a desire for the heroine's death precisely because it perpetually defers a narration of the heroine's sacrifice and a revelation (through description) of her body. Below we will see that in the *Hecuba*, a sense of completion is achieved through the messenger's description of Polyxena's death. Far from hiding her body, Talthybius in fact describes Polyxena's body and her final gestures in detail; and the corpse remains in the hands of the Greek soldiers, who plan to honor and adorn it. But the *Heraclidae* does not describe Macaria's death at all; instead her death is suggested by her exit in one scene, and the report of Athens' victory in another.⁵⁹ The audience's desire for a description of Macaria's death, a desire that is well documented in the critical arena, remains always

⁵⁹The sacrifice of Macaria may not be realistically represented in the text (i.e. through description), but this does not mean that it is not represented at all.

unfulfilled.⁶⁰ The audience or critics of the *Heraclidae* are therefore frustrated on two accounts: the death and body of Macaria are concealed, and the meaning of the text, they feel, is also hidden. The elusiveness and mystery of Macaria's body provoke critics to mutilate the text themselves, in an act that symbolically compensates for the unnarrated mutilation of Macaria's body.

If, as I argue here, the reader's desire for mutilation in effect completes the text, does this mean that the text itself requires this response and is therefore responsible for producing it? In other words, does the text deliberately provoke this response? And is the desire for mutilation *the only possible response* to Macaria's announced wish to be killed, or is there a way to read Macaria's offer to die that makes the play complete without mutilating the text? I think that there is. The reading that I propose completes the play but neither mutilates the text nor glorifies Macaria's self-sacrifice. Instead, this reading follows Macaria's own words and instructions about playing out the sacrifice scene.

⁶⁰Compared with the *Heraclidae*'s failure to narrate Macaria's death, the description that the *Hecuba* offers of Polyxena's death functions almost as visual representation, following Peter Brooks' distinction between "narrative text" and "painterly representation" in *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993) 20: "The greater reticence and indirection of the narrative text in depicting the body, as compared to painterly representation, has to do with the dynamic temporality of desire in narrative, the way in which narrative desire simultaneously seeks and puts off the erotic dénouement that signifies both its fulfillment and its end: the death of desiring, the silence of the text."

My reading addresses two of the points that Wilamowitz presents as major problems in the text of the *Heraclidae*: the apparent "rashness" involved in Macaria's decision to die, and the seeming failure in the text to glorify her after her death.⁶¹

Macaria does indeed arrive at the decision to die without any sign of anguish or reticence of the sort that precede Iphigenia's self-sacrifice in the *IA* and Polyxena's in the *Hecuba*. Unlike Polyxena and Iphigenia, Macaria is not specifically sought as a sacrificial victim before she offers to serve as one; it is said that any noble virgin will do. Iolaus tells her only that the sacrifice of a noble virgin is needed for victory (488-91), and she replies at once that she is "ready to die" (500-02):

μή νυν τρέσης ἔτ' ἐχθρὸν Ἀργείων δόρυ·
 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὴ πρὶν κελευσθῆναι, γέρον,
 θνήσκειν ἐτοίμη καὶ παρίστασθαι σφαγῇ.

Fear no longer the Argives' hostile spear, since I myself, before I am compelled to do so, old man, am ready to die and to surrender to sacrifice.

⁶¹Neither of these points is satisfactorily treated in Zuntz (1947), Peter Burian, "Euripides' *Heraclidae*: An Interpretation," *CPh* 72 (1977) 1-21, or O'Connor-Visser (1987), the three works which defend the received text of the play. Neither Zuntz or O'Connor-Visser admits the hypothesis as evidence in the argument over the play's completeness. O'Connor-Visser justifies the quickness of Macaria's decision to die by arguing that Euripides deliberately sought to limit her development as an individual (27-28). Burian similarly views the minimalism of the episode as an artistic decision made by Euripides in order to construct "an idealized portrayal of self-sacrifice, an image of flawless nobility.... We are given perfect heroism," Burian concludes, "and spared the bloody details" (10). Wilkins (1993) argues that the "initial unwillingness" of the victim to die "may have been suppressed on formal grounds": "in rhetorical terms," he explains, a scene of unwillingness has much in common with scenes of supplication; such a scene has already taken place in the drama" (xxi). Wilkins defends the truncated response to Macaria's death by comparing the short remarks made by Hecuba marking the death of Polyxena (xxix).

Wilamowitz objects that Macaria's decision is "alarmingly rash," and that the act of surrendering her life is not heroic because she appears not to value life: ("[Makaria] entschliesst sich so erschreckend rasch, ihr Leben zu opfern...dass wir es gar nicht für so sehr heroisch halten können, wenn sie ein Gut wegwirft, das bei ihr so gering im Preise steht").⁶² Macaria herself would agree that her wish is, in a sense, precocious, in that she makes it *before she is ordered or forced into it*, πρὶν κελευσθῆναι. With this phrase Macaria gestures, somewhat cynically, I think, toward what we are uncovering as one of the central topics of this play, the *inevitability* of male desire for female mutilation. What is striking, then, is not the quickness with which Macaria reaches the decision to die, but Euripides' decision to create a character who could see immediately *where this plot is headed*.⁶³ There is nothing missing from the text: Macaria simply anticipates the *necessity* of her sacrifice and leaps directly to it.

While Wilamowitz may claim that Macaria holds life cheap, Macaria herself suggests that *the world does not value her life*: if she continues to live in exile with her brothers, society will brand them φιλοψυχοῦντες ("people who

⁶²Wilamowitz (1882) 343. McLean (1934) 206, repeats and agrees with Wilamowitz. It is worth noting at this point the conflict in the scholarship on the *Heraclidae* and the *IA* between the opinion that Iphigenia's will to die is too ambivalent, and that Macaria's is not ambivalent enough. Both plays, it seems, cause critics to join in the search for the "perfect" virgin sacrifice.

⁶³Even without having as a guide either *Hec.* or *IA*--which were both produced later than the *Heraclidae*.

over-value life," 518). If, on the other hand, her brothers die while she goes on living, she has no hope of happiness (οὐδὲ...ἐλπίδ' εὖ πράξειν ἔχω, 521) since, as a woman, she will be despised and unwanted: τίς γὰρ κόρην ἔρημον ἢ δάμαρτ' ἔχειν/ἢ παιδοποιεῖν ἐξ ἐμοῦ βουλήσεται; ("Who will want to have an orphaned girl for a wife, who will want to produce children from me?" 523-24). To say, finally, that Macaria does not value her life is in essence to blame the victim.

The second point that this reading will address is what Wilamowitz describes as our longing for the chorus to glorify Macaria after her exit from the stage ("wir verlangen, dass der Chor die Jungfrau nun auch wirklich verherrliche"). The play's hypothesis, we remember, refers to a scene following Macaria's death in which she was honored (ταύτην μὲν οὖν εὐγενῶς ἀποθανοῦσαν ἐτίμησαν). Furthermore, in the *Hecuba* Polyxena is praised by the Greek soldiers after her death, while in the *IA*, the army interprets the apparent apotheosis of Iphigenia as her reward for facing death bravely. The *Heraclidae*, however, seems to defy tradition and frustrate our expectations, by never once referring to Macaria as dying or dead.

Yet before she leaves she is in fact celebrated by several characters including the chorus. Iolaus first praises her for offering to be sacrificed, but then suggests that her fate should be decided by drawing lots with her sisters (539-46). When Macaria objects to this suggestion, refusing to die in any way that might make her appear

unwilling (τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐγὼ/ δίδωμ' ἐκοῦσα τοῖσδ', ἀναγκασθεῖσα δ' οὐ,
550-51), Iolaus exalts her still higher (553-55):

ὄδ' αὖ λόγος σοι τοῦ πρὶν εὐγενέστερος,
κάκεινος ἦν ἄριστος· ἀλλ' ὑπερφέρεις
τόλμη τε τόλμαν καὶ λόγῳ χρηστῷ λόγον.

This speech of yours now is more noble than the one before, and that was already excellent. But you surpass daring with daring and speech with excellent speech.

Later he pronounces her the bravest of all women (μέγιστον ἐκπρέπουσ' εὐψυχία/ πασῶν γυναικῶν), and promises that she will also be the most honored (τιμιωτάτη), both while she is alive and after her death (597-99). Demophon likewise says she is the bravest woman he has ever seen (τλημονεστάτην δέ σε/ πασῶν γυναικῶν εἶδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ, 570-71). The chorus finally concludes the scene with an ode that describes the fame that Macaria leaves behind her (οὐδ' ἀκλεῆς νιν/ δόξα πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ὑποδέξεται, 623-24), and celebrates the victory of virtue over troubles (ἀδ' ἀρετὰ βαίνει διὰ μόχθων, 625).

If Macaria's fame is supposed to last forever, then why is she never again mentioned onstage after her exit? We can best interpret the silence in the text from Macaria's point of view. Speaking for the last time in the play, Macaria's explicit wish is that death will render her oblivious to everything, including the honors that the world will confer upon her. She instructs her brothers (586-96):

κἂν ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων
καὶ νόστος ὑμῖν εὐρεθῆ ποτ' ἐκ θεῶν,
μέμνησθε τὴν σώτειραν ὡς θάψαι χρεῶν·
κάλλιστά τοι δίκαιον· οὐ γὰρ ἐνδεῆς
ὑμῖν παρέστην ἀλλὰ προὔθανον γένους.

τάδ' ἀντὶ παίδων ἐστὶ μοι κειμήλια
καὶ παρθενείας, εἴ τι δὴ κατὰ χθονός.
εἴη γε μέντοι μηδέν· εἰ γὰρ ἔξομεν
κάκει μερίμνας οἱ θανούμενοι βροτῶν,
οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι τις τρέψεται· τὸ γὰρ θανεῖν
κακῶν μέγιστον φάρμακον νομίζεται.

If the gods help you ever reach home trouble-free,
remember that you must bury the woman who saved you.
Fair is fair: I did not stand helpless beside you, but
I died for my family. This is what I can treasure
instead of children and virginity, if anything actually
exists in the underworld. I truly hope there is nothing.
Because if we have concerns even there when we are dead,
I don't know where anyone can turn. Death is considered
the most potent cure for troubles.

Macaria's disappearance and the silence regarding her death that follow this are, I think, the text's way of honoring her wish to be utterly annihilated by death. From Macaria's point of view, nothingness is ultimately the highest "honor" that she can receive; it frees her from care and from perception, of pain as well as of glory. As long as she is alive and still rooted in the values and traditions of society, Macaria is compelled to care about such things as the treatment of her corpse; for this reason she reminds her brothers to honor her by burying it. And for a moment she seems to think that this form of respect will matter to her in the underworld, that her tomb will be as important to her there as children and virginity traditionally are to women living in the world. But in the middle of this conventional sentiment, and in the middle of a sentence, Macaria wearily wishes to be relieved of human cares, including caring for her body. Glory and physicality appear to be two of the concerns that Macaria hopes to escape in the underworld.

We might at this point note the distinct contrast between the silence that follows Macaria's death in the *Heraclidae* and the demanding voice of Achilles' ghost in the *Hecuba*. As we will see in the following discussion of the *Hecuba*, Achilles speaks from the grave, demanding the sacrifice of Polyxena, his γέρας. Honor and glory are apparently important to him in the underworld, and he still desires the sacrifice of a female body as a mark of his glory. Meanwhile, in the *Heraclidae*, Macaria's body and the glory that her death is meant to win for her vanish at the same time; as she leaves the stage to meet her fate, Iolaus and the chorus speak for the last time of her supposed eternal fame. But her own wish for freedom from what are to her the burdens of life is fulfilled by the text's uncanny silence after her exit.

My reading of Macaria's self-sacrifice differs from traditional readings in that it emphasizes not what Macaria wishes to obtain by her death (i.e. safety for her family and for Athens, glory for herself), but what she wishes to escape. The negative reasons that Macaria gives for dying reflect, I think, her own mind and spirit, whereas the positive reasons she recites echo Greek ideology. Her personal distrust of society overrides any general respect she might have for social norms. We observed already how Macaria reasons that if she survives her brothers, as a woman she will find herself barred from society. One thing Macaria is impatient to escape, then, is the female condition in the

society she would have to live in. Her disgust for the abuses perpetrated by society, specifically the way in which her corpse might be looked at and handled, is deeply felt in her request to be allowed to die in the arms of her aged guardian, Iolaus, and to have her body concealed by robes: ἔπου δέ, πρέσβυ· σῆ γὰρ ἐνθανεῖν χερσὶ/θέλω, πέπλοις δὲ σῶμ' ἐμὸν κρύψον παρῶν ("Accompany me, old man, for I wish to die in your hand; stay near and hide my body with robes," 560-61). When Iolaus disappoints Macaria by refusing to be present at her death, she asks him to make sure, then, that she dies in women's hands, not men's (μή μ' ἐν ἀρσένων/ἀλλ' ἐν γυναικῶν χερσὶν ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον, 565-66).

These final requests have been interpreted as the sign of childish dependency or feminine modesty.⁶⁴ But I would argue that Macaria is not childishly clinging to Iolaus, nor is she concerned in her final moments with the world's standards of appropriate female behavior. It is only according to the perspective of dominant male society that Macaria's rejection of the hands and eyes of strange men appears as a sign of modesty (or what Grube refers to as "engaging modesty"⁶⁵). If, however, we think of Macaria not as a child or a woman, but a person, then her wish to die in Iolaus' hands suggests nothing so much as her despair of

⁶⁴O'Connor-Visser (1987) 28, writes that Macaria "shows an almost childlike dependence in her wish to die in Iolaus' or at least a female's arms....Her wish to be covered in robes is also the personal note of a young girl conscious of the demands of αἰδώς." Wilkins (1993) loc.cit.: "The request that women...receive her body at the time of sacrifice is a point of decorum akin to that of Polyxena and Iphigenia."

⁶⁵Grube (1941) 175.

humanity. She may trust Iolaus, who until now has protected her, but she appears to distrust the Athenians, despite the fact that Athens has granted sanctuary to her family. She may say that she hopes by dying to return the favor (*χάρις*, 548) that Athens has done for them, but she appears to find the Athenians personally abhorrent.

Second after the old man Iolaus, Macaria trusts women: if we now think of her final request, the wish to die in women's hands, and consider it from a specifically feminist perspective, it suggests, in my opinion, that while Macaria's general misanthropy may yield for women, with regard to men it is adamant.⁶⁶ Her insistence that her corpse be kept out of men's hands brings to mind Hecuba's fear of the outrages that the Greek soldiers might perform on the corpse of her daughter Polyxena.

"Death for women in literature," writes Carolyn Heilbrun, "is the ultimate room of one's own."⁶⁷ Macaria longs to be left alone: by dying she deprives society of the chance to abuse her; the mode of death that she specifically requests further deprives society, specifically male society, of the opportunity to see and touch her body. Euripides likewise takes Macaria from our view; after she has left the stage, we are not allowed to hear of her death, and in this

⁶⁶I agree with Vellacott (1975) 191, that Macaria's wish to die in women's hands "is pointedly not a gesture of maiden modesty....it is a final despair of meeting nobility...in any man."

⁶⁷Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Reinventing Womanhood* (NY: Norton, 1979) 183. Heilbrun is speaking specifically of the heroines in recent novels and stories written by women, such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Doris Lessing's "To Room 19."

way we are prevented from "seeing" her body. The humane response to Macaria's offer to die is, I think, deliberately not to insist that her death be described and celebrated, but to acknowledge her very great need, and her perfect right, to die--if she must die--in peace.⁶⁸

Hecuba

The prologue of the *Hecuba* is delivered by the ghost of Polydorus, Hecuba's youngest son, who was murdered before the action of the play begins. He shares a fate similar to the one that his sister Polyxena will suffer in the course of the play: both the Trojan prince and princess are killed by foreign powers (Polydorus by the Thracian king, Polyxena by the Greek army). There is, however, a significant difference

⁶⁸Letting Macaria die in privacy does not mean that we, or the text, placidly accept the demand for female sacrifice in the first place. Demophon himself refuses, on behalf of Athens at least, to sacrifice a noble Athenian girl; there is, then, an implicit criticism, I think, in his ultimate approval of the oracle when it does not involve the daughter of an Athenian citizen. For the view that Euripides is criticizing not Demophon but only the oracles, see E.M. Blaiklock, *The Male Characters of Euripides* (Wellington: New Zealand UP, 1952) 58: "Euripides could hardly make it more clear...that the oracle was doing its best to prevent the performance of an act of mercy, by demanding as a prerequisite an act which offended the moral sense of an enlightened Athenian." Demophon allows Macaria to sacrifice herself for Athenian victory because, Blaiklock explains, "it is not the Athenian's part or duty to interfere with the scruples of other peoples." Yet the oracles which unambiguously require the death of a noble girl are themselves Athenian, and form an institution which the Athenian government, represented here by Demophon, regards with great respect. Thus, while I agree with Blaiklock that Euripides criticizes the oracles that call for female sacrifice, I do not think that Demophon, who admires Macaria's offer to be sacrificed, is presented as a wholly "enlightened" man.

in their experience. As he tells us in the prologue, Polydorus was killed by the Thracian king Polymestor, to whose care Priam had entrusted his youngest son as well as a wealth of gold. Immediately after the fall of Troy, Polydorus was murdered by his royal host, χρυσοῦ χάριν, "for the sake of the gold" (25). In other words, Polydorus was an obstruction, coming between the king and the object of his desire. But Polyxena is slaughtered as an actual prize and object of desire. As Polydorus explains, the ghost of Achilles has demanded that Polyxena be taken and slaughtered as his γέρασ ("prize," 40-41).

Thus, despite certain similarities (in age and fate), Polydorus and Polyxena differ in their experience of death: while death turns Polyxena into an object (the prize of Achilles), Polydorus is, in death, a speaking and seeing subject.⁶⁹ His voice transcends death: "Ἦκω νεκρῶν κευθμῶνα...λιπὼν ("I am come, having left the hiding place of the dead," 1-2).⁷⁰ The voice of Polydorus is, moreover, the voice of an omniscient narrator, foretelling the events that will unfold in the course of the play: "Fate compels my sister to die on this day. And my mother will see the two corpses of her two children" (43-45). While Polydorus is the narrator, Polyxena is narrated: this is the story of Polyxena's death, her dead brother informs us. While

⁶⁹Contrast Alcestis' inability to speak when she is returned from the dead (discussed above).

⁷⁰Passages from the *Hecuba* are quoted from Diggle (1991). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

Polydorus sees his sister's future and exposes it to the audience, he remains for his own part unseen: *νῦν δ' ὑπὲρ μητρὸς φίλης/ Ἐκάβης αἰσσω, σῶμ' ἐρημώσας ἐμόν* ("I flit now over my dear mother Hecuba, having left my body," 30-31).⁷¹ His voice, and his subjectivity, transcend physical existence since he speaks even though he has no body. Based on the remains of Greek tragedy, this "prologizing ghost" is a Euripidean invention.⁷² The ghost of Polydorus is used, I would argue, to establish the ascendancy of the male voice and the male gaze, and to prepare the audience for the spectacle of Polyxena's death. Though they both suffer death at their enemy's hands, and pathos might have thus been stirred equally for them both, yet the *focal point* of the play is not the death of the young man, but of the young woman, Polyxena.

But Polydorus' voice is not responsible for the treatment Polyxena suffers. Rather, her sacrifice is required by the Greek hero Achilles, a man who, like Polydorus, speaks from the grave. Though dead and buried, Achilles nevertheless halts the Greek army's homeward voyage

⁷¹The ghost's announcement that he has no body renders his appearance on stage problematic. With Grube (1941) 215, I imagine that, in order to make Polydorus appear "ghostly," Euripides "must have relied on clothes, mask and voice, especially...the last." The problem may be resolved by the distinction Justina Gregory makes in "Euripides *Hecuba* 54," *Phoenix* 46.3 (1992) 268-69, that while the ghost of Polydorus may indeed be visible to the audience, he nevertheless does not appear to Hecuba (asleep or awake), and thus he "must possess the power to influence her by his proximity alone." For a contrasting view see O'Connor-Visser (1987) 52.

⁷²F.L. Lucas, *Euripides and His Influence* (NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923) 19-20.

and demands that the Trojan princess be slaughtered at his tomb. Polydorus explains (37-43):

ὁ Πηλέως γὰρ παῖς ὑπὲρ τύμβου φανεῖς
κατέσχ' Ἀχιλλεὺς πᾶν στράτευμ' Ἑλληνικόν,
πρὸς οἶκον εὐθύνοντας ἐναλίαν πλάτην·
αἰτεῖ δ' ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν Πολυξένην
τύμβῳ φίλον πρόσφαγμα καὶ γέρας λαβεῖν.
καὶ τεύξεται τοῦδ' οὐδ' ἀδώρητος φίλων
ἔσται πρὸς ἀνδρῶν.

For the son of Peleus, Achilles, appearing above his tomb, held back the whole Greek expedition as they steered their sea voyage home; he demanded to receive my sister Polyxena at his tomb as his personal sacrificial victim and prize. And he will get this and will not go unrewarded by his own men.

Achilles is known in the *Iliad* for his egoism and desire; in fact his willfulness in the epic (after Agamemnon has taken Briseis from him) imperils the success of the entire Greek expedition against Troy. In the *Hecuba*, too, the success of the Greek journey home is threatened by the insistent will of Achilles. The welfare of the army depends on the satisfaction of the hero's desire.

After the prologue, it is Odysseus who presses Achilles' suit, acting as a kind of lawyer for the dead hero. Throughout Greek mythology and literature, Odysseus represents the power of language. The chorus of captive Trojan women describe the force and effectiveness of the speech he made to the Greeks in favor of Polyxena's sacrifice (130-35);

σπουδαὶ δὲ λόγων κατατεινομένων
ἦσαν ἴσαι πως, πρὶν ὁ ποικιλόφρων
κόπις ἠδυλόγος δημοχαριστῆς
Λαερτιάδης πείθει στρατιάν
μὴ τὸν ἄριστον Δαναῶν πάντων

δούλων σφαγίων οὔνεκ' ἀπωθεῖν...

The intensity of speeches struggling against each other was fairly balanced, until the wily, lying, sweet-talking, people-pleasing, son of Laertes persuaded the army not to repudiate the best of all the Greek men because of the sacrifice of slave women...

The army thus favors unanimously the proposal to sacrifice a captive woman. Because he is ἄριστος (134), Achilles may demand and receive Polyxena's slaughter. This is the first of several formulations of *aristeia* in the play.

We can examine Odysseus' rhetoric first-hand in the following scene when he comes to claim Polyxena. As Hecuba tries to resist him, pressing her own claim to Polyxena, the words they exchange underline the differences between them and between their relative positions. In this arena, the victorious Greek male successfully colonizes the defeated Trojan female.

While Odysseus phrases his argument in impersonal terms, Hecuba's language conveys intense personal feeling. Odysseus issues imperatives, which he then qualifies by claiming that he speaks not for himself but for the whole Greek army.⁷³ In the previous scene, the chorus told Hecuba that Odysseus had successfully lobbied for the slaughter of Polyxena. Odysseus, however, represents himself to Hecuba as a humble *follower* rather than an arrogant *leader*. He tells her that he is there merely to report the decree *voted on by the army*: "it was deemed best by the Achaeans to sacrifice your child

⁷³I agree here with Grube (1941) 217: "Most of what [Odysseus] says is quite reasonable, but we love him no better for that. In this he is like Jason, and for the same reason: a complete lack of all sympathy, indeed of all emotion."

Polyxena" (218-21).⁷⁴ Thus he legitimizes the act as politically expedient and necessary. The army, he claims, dispatched him to be her escort (222-23). In a series of imperatives, Odysseus finally urges Hecuba to accept her defeat (225-28):

οἶσθ' οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον· μήτ' ἀποσπασθῆς βία
 μήτ' ἐς χερῶν ἄμιλλαν ἐξέλθῃς ἐμοί,
 γίγνωσκε δ' ἄλκην καὶ παρουσίαν κακῶν
 τῶν σῶν.

You know what to do: Do not try to pull your daughter away by force, nor enter in hand-to-hand struggle with me; acknowledge my strength and the reality of your troubles.

Odysseus has paved the way for this imperious terrorism with democratic-sounding rhetoric: "The army voted...here's what you have to do." Throughout the play, this democratic mode of discourse is presented as standard form among the Greek leaders. For instance, Agamemnon later appoints himself arbitrator in the dispute between Hecuba and Polymestor: ("Speak, so that by hearing from you and her in turn I might rule justly," 1130-31). Odysseus uses a democratic style of speech in order to dissimulate personal interest in the sacrifice of Polyxena.

In conflict against this rhetoric, Hecuba's own mode of discourse proves ineffectual. Instead of couching personal feelings in impersonal language as Odysseus does, Hecuba exposes them to him. She responds, for instance, to his

⁷⁴It is worth noting, with Gregory (1991) 88, that "[i]n reporting the decision to sacrifice Polyxena (220), Odysseus adopts the stylized language of an Athenian decree."

announcement of the army's decision to kill her daughter with a cry of sorrow and the wish that she were dead: αἰαί...κάγωγ' ἄρ' οὐκ ἔθνησκον οὐ μ' ἐχρήν θανεῖν ("Ah!....I did not die when I ought to have died," 229-31) Then in very poignant terms she describes her loving and dependent relationship with Polyxena: Polyxena, she says, is πόλις, τιθήνη, βάκτρον, ἡγεμὼν ὁδοῦ ("my city, my nurse, my staff, the guide of my road," 281). By describing Polyxena as an active agent rather than an object, and as *her* servant and *her* source of pride, Hecuba implicitly challenges the Greek view of Polyxena as a victim, the servant and the prize of their great hero Achilles.

Thus, however affectionate and tender Hecuba makes herself appear, she is in fact aggressively arguing with Odysseus, pitting personal feeling against democratic decision-making, and a mother's claim against the military's. Ultimately, though, she has recourse to objective arguments and even flattery. She invokes the custom of pity for captive women (287-90); she quotes the Greek law against the killing of slaves (291-92). Lastly she flatters Odysseus: his ἀξίωμα ("prestige," 293) persuades men to do what he says; it is this, she says, that is the source of his authority. So that even if his actual words are not effective, his ἀξίωμα affects men's thinking and their actions. She begs Odysseus, therefore, to draw on ἀξίωμα in order to reverse the army's resolution (293-95).

Hecuba must know her speech will fail, if for no other reason than that she herself lacks ἀξίωμα. Can she, as a

woman, ever possess such a quality? The play suggests at several points that male discourse is by nature different from female discourse; that is, *women do not have the same strategies of persuasion available to them as men do*. For instance, while a man draws principally on *ἄξίωμα*, his *prestige*, a woman's ability to affect someone (a man?) is a function of her *body*. The association between a woman's voice and her body is fully explored in Polyxena's death-scene, where the spectacle of her body, together with the sound of her speech, persuade the Greek soldiers that she is noble. The details of this scene will be considered below. But for now, the conjunction between the female voice and the female body is particularly relevant to the problem, which is a recurring one, of Hecuba's failed discourse. For not only does Hecuba's rhetoric fail to affect Odysseus, but later in the play, when she needs Agamemnon to help her punish Polymestor, her rhetoric is again unsuccessful. Struggling to find the right words, Hecuba finally begs Agamemnon to "stand back and look [at her] as a painter [looks, presumably at his model]," as if the spectacle of her body might be effective where the sound of her voice is not (807-08). Voice and body are again curiously mingled in Hecuba's wish (836-40):

εἴ μοι γένοιτο φθόγγος ἐν βραχίουσιν
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ κόμαισι καὶ ποδῶν βάσει
ἢ Δαιδάλου τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν τινος,
ὡς πάνθ' ἄμαρτῆ σῶν ἔχοιτο γουνάτων
κλαίοντ', ἐπισκῆπτοντα παντοίους λόγους.

If only my voice were in my arms and my hands and my hair and my footstep, by the art of Daedalus or some

god, so that all crying they could at once hold your knees, pressing words of all kinds upon you.

While the wish to possess the art of speaking may be a commonplace in tragedy (e.g. Iphigenia at IA 1211 wishes for the voice of Orpheus), the form of Hecuba's wish is unusual: she wishes that the craftsman's art could re-shape her body, positioning her voice in her arms, her hands, her hair, her footstep.⁷⁵ This wish to conflate the body and the voice is especially unusual if we consider for a moment the conventions of Greek literary tradition.

As Sheila Murnaghan points out, Greek tragedy is implicated "in culture's constant project of protecting, covering, disguising, concealing, and ignoring the body--and, especially, replacing the body's adventures with forms of speech."⁷⁶ Yet in the *Hecuba*, I would argue, this principle applies only to the *male* voices: Polydorus and Achilles are indeed represented solely by their voices. Hecuba, on the other hand, wishes to mingle voice and body, and voice and body are blended in Polyxena's death-scene, suggesting that the *female* voice is inseparable from the *female* body. Hecuba feels that her voice would be strengthened if it were something other than a voice--if it were, paradoxically, her body.

Polyxena speaks to Odysseus in his terms, and to Hecuba in hers. Critics have often noted the modal difference

⁷⁵Gregory (1991) 111 and 119 n.69 gives a pointed reading of the image Hecuba uses, and defends it contra A. Michelini, who considers it "astonishingly grotesque."

⁷⁶Sheila Murnaghan, "Body and Voice in Greek Tragedy," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 1.2 (spring 1988) 23.

between Polyxena's lament, on the one hand, when Hecuba informs her that the Greeks plan to slaughter her (177-215), and, on the other hand, the speech she subsequently addresses to Odysseus (342-78).⁷⁷ On the whole, though, Polyxena's transformation from a frightened victim to a willing one has sparked nothing like the scholarly controversy caused by Iphigenia's famous *volte-face* in the *IA*.⁷⁸ But I argue that the difference between Polyxena's two main speeches is more important than critics usually allow, and that it is in fact analogous to Iphigenia's change of rhetoric in the *IA*. The difference does not necessarily indicate an emotionally charged change of *heart* (as it is usually argued for Iphigenia), but is, I think, a deliberate change of *voice*. Our task, then, is to analyze the modulation of Polyxena's voice in the context of the two other voices, Hecuba's and Odysseus', that attempt to control her discourse at these critical moments.

Polyxena's two modes of discourse are aurally quite distinct: her first words are part of an *amoibaion* with Hecuba, whereas her later speech to Odysseus consists of

⁷⁷See, for instance, O'Connor-Visser (1987) 64: "The transition from mourning-song (197-215) to rhetorical rhesis (342-78) is remarkable. Whereas Hecuba makes a desperate attempt to persuade Polyxena to implore Odysseus with emotional appeals, Polyxena is much more mature." I would dispute the interpretation of Polyxena's second mode of discourse as a sign of maturity, as the following argument will show.

⁷⁸For the phrase *volte-face* see Herbert Siegel, "Self-Delusion and the *Volte-Face* of Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *Hermes* 108 (1980) 300-21. For further bibliography on the question of Iphigenia's apparent transformation, see bibliography below on the *IA*.

spoken iambics.⁷⁹ Polyxena's two "languages" thus are correlated with two poetic modes and, in turn, with two distinct moods. For though iambic trimeter may sometimes express emotion (chiefly anger), in general it indicates a controlled state of mind, whereas the lyric meters usually indicate heightened feeling (especially fear, sorrow, pity, hope). Polyxena's exchange, in lyrics, with her mother is thus marked as emotional, expressive, and relatively unregulated, as is Hecuba's part in the dialogue. Her principal feeling is one of fear, instilled in her by Hecuba's call to her to come out of the tent. The summoning voice of her mother, Polyxena says, "scared me out, as if I were a bird, with such astonishment": μ' ὄστ' ὄρνιν/θάμβει τῷδ' ἐξέπταξας, 178-79). Even before Hecuba explains the Greek decree, Polyxena cries out δειμαίνω, δειμαίνω, μήτηρ ("I am frightened, I am frightened, mother!" 184). Hearing finally that she is going to be slaughtered, she laments (191-93):

οἴμοι, μήτηρ, πῶς φθέγγη;
ἀμέγαρτα κακῶν μάνυσόν μοι,
μάνυσον μήτηρ.

Oh no, mother! What are you saying? Uncover for me my unenviable sufferings, uncover them, mother.

Polyxena then begins to lament her impending death and her mother's suffering. When she opens with reference to "suffering, feeling everything terrible": ὦ δεινὰ παθοῦσ', ὦ παντλάμων (197), we assume Polyxena means herself and her own

⁷⁹The similar arrangement of Alcestis' two major speeches (lyric song followed by iambic dialogue) has been discussed in the previous section.

speech to Odysseus, in which she endorses her own death, echoes the tone and language used by Odysseus himself.

Odysseus' speech rehearses the Greek code of heroism. A hero, he says, is "a brave and willing man" (307). Entire cities collapse when the hero receives less honor than the coward. Achilles, he continues, is ἄξιος τιμῆς ("worthy of honor") because he died on behalf of Greece (309-10). If dead heroes are not honored, soldiers will stop risking their lives in battle, and will cherish life over death (φιλοψυχῆσομεν, 315-16). For his own part, Odysseus claims to despise great things in life, in favor of the more enduring pleasure of having a highly visible and decorated tomb (317-20):

καὶ μὴν ἔμοιγε ζῶντι μὲν καθ' ἡμέραν
 κεῖ σμίκρ' ἔχοιμι πάντ' ἂν ἀρκούντως ἔχοι·
 τύμβον δὲ βουλοίμην ἂν ἀξιούμενον
 τὸν ἐμὸν ὀρᾶσθαι· διὰ μακροῦ γὰρ ἡ χάρις.

And as for me, even if I were to have only small bits of everything in my daily life, that would suffice. I would rather my tomb be seen honored; for the gratification is long-lasting.

Why does Odysseus lecture Hecuba and Polyxena on the principles valued by the Greek army? Presumably he is trying to convince them that Achilles deserves to be honored or decorated (by Polyxena's corpse) because he was πρόθυμος ("willing") and died for Greece.

But after hearing Achilles exalted and promised great honor in death, Polyxena seems attracted to the heroic ideal, identifying her fate with the heroic death of Achilles rather

than with her status as a potential decoration for the hero's tomb. As if inspired by Odysseus' description of the death and glory of the warrior-hero, she sets out to prove that she too is "a brave and willing man." But the male hero's bravery and willingness are quite distinct from Polyxena's action, which is defined by society as acquiescence or compliance. Active heroism is impossible for Polyxena; she can only achieve glory by redefining obedience as nobility. She sets out to do this by displaying courage instead of fear, by adopting the objective discourse used by Odysseus, and by patterning herself not after Hecuba, but after the Greek hero described by Odysseus.

Rejecting her mother's advice, then, to adopt the language of a suppliant, Polyxena assures Odysseus that she does not intend to argue with him or plead for her life. The reasons she gives for her acquiescence are phrased largely in terms borrowed from Greek ethics, including *ἀνάγκη*, *κακία*, and *φιλοψυχία*. We sense both that she is a Trojan imitating Greek values and a woman imitating male values (345-48):

θάρσει· πέφευγας τὸν ἔμὸν Ἰκέσιον Δία·
ὡς ἔψομαί γε τοῦ τ' ἀναγκαίου χάριν
θανεῖν τε χρήζουσ'· εἰ δὲ μὴ βουλήσομαι,
κακὴ φανοῦμαι καὶ φιλόψυχος γυνή.

Have courage: you have escaped my invocation of Zeus, the god of suppliants; because I will certainly come with you, compelled by necessity and desiring to die. If I were not willing, I would look like an ignoble and life-cherishing woman.

Only moments earlier Odysseus promised honor to the man who was noble and willing to die for Greece, implying that to

cherish life was ignoble. So Polyxena, as if to prove that she is as noble as Achilles, announces that she is willing to die.

It becomes clear in the course of her speech that Polyxena is motivated by a certain nostalgia for her former status and the attendant privileges she enjoyed as a Trojan princess, when one of life's pleasures was being "looked at" by the other women and girls (γυναιξὶ παρθένοις τ' ἀπόβλεπτος, 355). Now, however, as a slave to the Greeks, she has no such pleasures: νῦν δ' εἰμὶ δούλη· πρῶτα μὲν με τοῦνομα/ θανεῖν ἐρᾶν τίθησιν οὐκ εἰωθὸς ὄν ("As things are now, I am a slave; in the first place, the very name makes me desire to die, it being not what I am used to," 357-58).

Dying a heroic death, however, is one way to attract attention and admiration. But does it attract the kind of attention that Polyxena formerly enjoyed? On the one hand, Polyxena's nobility is praised by Hecuba and the chorus of Trojan women (379-82); this is, in fact, the kind of admiration Polyxena routinely enjoyed among "Trojan women and girls." What Polyxena is not used to, on the other hand, is the gaze that is set on her by the Greek soldiers when she dies.

For it is clear that the Greek soldiers look at Polyxena not merely as a royal woman, but as an erotically interesting one. If what the dead hero desired was a woman of great status, then Hecuba would have been a better victim than Polyxena. Hecuba herself discovers this important

distinction when she actually does offer, twice in fact, to replace her daughter at the sacrificial altar (385-88 and 396). The queen's offer attracts neither praise nor admiration, but Odysseus refuses it outright, and some of the play's readers find it laughable.⁸⁰ Why is Hecuba not celebrated (and killed) like her daughter? "The reasons may well have been as much aesthetic as ritual," writes Justina Gregory, "for the spectacle of an aged body collapsing in the dust would inspire very different emotions in the spectators: grief, shame, disgust....Sacrifice is not a choice open to Hecuba...."⁸¹

It may be said that the Greek army's interest in watching the sacrifice of Polyxena coincides rather nicely with her own nostalgia for the visibility that was once her privilege as a princess. Yet, however complementary their motives appear on the surface, it soon becomes apparent that Polyxena's sacrifice is in fact viewed one way by Polyxena, and the opposite way by the Greeks. For while Polyxena's dying words indicate that she sees herself as comparable to a male hero (or a hero of unmarked gender), the gaze of the Greeks, and the particular manner in which they kill her, mark her specifically as female.⁸²

⁸⁰Grube (1941) 218 writes that Polyxena's speech "is full of quiet dignity," and thus she "lifts the proceedings to a higher beauty"; but Hecuba, he adds, "makes the wild suggestion that they should sacrifice her instead." The implication that Hecuba's offer is errant madness suggests (wrongly, I think) that Polyxena's is by contrast reasonable.

⁸¹Gregory (1991) 98.

⁸²For further discussion of the erotic aspects of Polyxena's death see Charles Segal, "Violence and the Other: Greek, Female, and Barbarian in Euripides' Hecuba," *TAPA* 120 (1990) 111-12.

The two viewpoints are presented simultaneously, superimposed one on top of the other, since Polyxena's dying words are reported in the play by Talthybius, a Greek messenger. Though Polyxena's speech is embedded within a Greek's, we can assume, based on Greek dramatic convention, that she is being quoted accurately. I would also argue that the comments made by Talthybius speaking as the messenger of the Greek army are meant to be representative of the Greek position generally; we "see" Polyxena's death through his eyes, but he is an insignificant character next to the Greek army as a collective body. His interpretation of the event may therefore be held to represent the Greek army's view of it.

What Polyxena's language emphasizes about herself as she dies is neither appearance nor femininity, but her high status. She explicitly states that she will die as a member of the royal family, βασιλίσ, and as one who is free, ἐλευθέρα. The only reference she makes to her physical body is an order forbidding the soldiers from touching it (547-52):

ἽΩ τὴν ἐμὴν πέρσαντες Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν,
 ἐκοῦσα θνήσκω· μή τις ἄψηται χρὸς
 τοῦμοῦ· παρέξω γὰρ δέρην εὐκαρδίως.
 ἐλευθέραν δέ μ', ὡς ἐλευθέρα θάνω,
 πρὸς θεῶν, μεθέντες κτείνατ'· ἐν νεκροῖσι γὰρ
 δούλη κεκλήσθαι βασιλὶς οὐσ' αἰσχύνομαι. '

'Greek destroyers of my city, I die willingly; let no one touch my flesh: for I will extend my neck bravely. I am free, and so that I may die free, by god, let go and kill me. Being a princess I am ashamed to be called a slave among the dead.'

But at the end of this speech, Polyxena draws the soldiers' eyes to her body, by opening her dress and offering her bare chest to the executioner. Talthybius (speaking for the army) renders the scene, paying meticulous attention to the various parts of her body that are exposed, especially her "breasts" or "chest" (558-565):

λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος
 ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ' ὀμφαλὸν
 μαστούς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὡς ἀγάλματος
 κάλλιστα...

Taking her robes off her shoulders, she tore them to the middle of her torso at the level of her navel and showed her breasts and her chest, which was like a statue's, most beautiful.

Talthybius focuses attention on Polyxena's bosom, using two words, *μαστοί* and *στέρνα*, to describe it. The first term, *μαστοί*, is the general term for a woman's breasts. The second term, *στέρνα*, is usually unmarked for gender, but it becomes, in Talthybius' usage, a marked one since it is coupled by the marked term for "a woman's breasts" and by the qualifiers, "like a statue's, most beautiful." This suggests that the Greeks look at Polyxena as at a beautiful statue of a naked woman.

But Polyxena does not see herself as a woman baring statuesque breasts. Her language suggests that, on the contrary, *she feels herself to be a male warrior baring his chest* (561-65):

...καὶ καθεῖσα πρὸς γαῖαν γόνυ
 ἔλεξε πάντων τλημονέστατον λόγον·
 Ἴδού, τόδ', εἰ μὲν στέρνον, ὦ νεανία,
 παίειν προθυμῆ, παίσον, εἰ δ' ὑπ' αὐχένα

χρήζεις πάρεσσι λαιμὸς εὐτρεπῆς ὄδε.

Then dropping her knee to the ground, she delivered the pluckiest speech of all, "Look, here, if you want to strike my chest, young man, strike; if you want to do it on the neck, here, my throat is ready."

The baring of her chest may be construed as erotic, and indeed, this is the interpretation given by the Greeks, to judge from Talthybius' commentary. Another interpretation of her gesture becomes possible, however, if we allow Polyxena's own words to guide our reading. Polyxena presents the executioner with the choice between striking her chest (στέρνον) and slitting her throat (λαιμός). Each mode of execution has its own significance, as Nicole Loraux observes: "in the throat, like a sacrificial victim, or in the breast, like a warrior."⁸³ As Loraux also points out, when used of a man, στέρνον "is a region of the body that is thought a particularly good place to strike an enemy in battle: he is killed at a blow and, not having run away, earns a noble death" (58). By contrast, Talthybius reports that Polyxena uncovered her μαστούς τ' στέρνα ("breasts and chest"). The word μαστός in tragedy denotes specifically a woman's breast: "the mother's breast swollen with milk [and] the erotically provocative bosom..." (57). It is apparent, then, that the gesture that Polyxena intends to be perceived as *brave and manly*, is instead viewed by the Greeks as *erotic and womanly*. The executioner's ultimate decision underscores Polyxena's female nature: for he hesitates and then chooses

⁸³Nicole Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, tr. Anthony Forster (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1987) 60. The following page numbers in the text of this paragraph refer to Loraux (1987).

the throat, treating Polyxena not as a warrior, but as a sacrificial victim (or a woman).⁸⁴ Refused a warrior's death, Loraux concludes (and I agree), Polyxena "is struck at women's weak point and is reclaimed at the last moment by femininity."⁸⁵

The response of the Greek army likewise imbues the death with erotic meaning. Talthybius reports that immediately after the sacrifice, virtually every soldier responded in the same way, all of them setting out at once to gather leaves to throw on the corpse, or logs to build a funeral pyre (571-75). There was a problem, though, because one of (or some of) the soldiers failed to have the response that was automatic in the others. Talthybius speaks of the soldier "not carrying," ὁ δ' οὐ φέρων (575), meaning one not gathering the leaves or logs or decoration with which the others all plan to glorify Polyxena's corpse. The soldier who fails to carry such things stands out among his comrades, who then chastise him for his crude apathy (577-80):

Ἔστηκας, ὦ κάκιστε, τῇ νεάνιδι
οὐ πέπλον οὐδὲ κόσμον ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων;
οὐκ εἶ τι δώσων τῇ περισσ' εὐκαρδίῳ
ψυχὴν τ' ἀρίστη;

"You stand there, great villain, without a dress or jewelry in your hands for the young lady? Will you offer nothing to the stunningly brave and noble-hearted?"

⁸⁴Loraux (1987) 57. Loraux adds: "there are very few women in tragedy to whom death comes through the breast."

⁸⁵Loraux (1987) 61. By contrast, when in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Polyxena again is said to offer both throat and breast, her executioner chooses her breast (and she dies *plus quam femina virgo*, *Met.*13.475f.).

But this soldier serves, I think, as an implicit rebuke of the others. Though abused for his apparent lack of response, the soldier in fact expresses his response silently; though it obviously lacks the fervid passion of the others', this response is charged with feeling. It is in fact the pointedness of the soldier's inactivity that provokes anger in the others.

The majority thus responds to Polyxena's death by idealizing her and decorating her corpse; one soldier's refusal to be a part of the celebration is interpreted by the others as bad. But who are the true bad men from Euripides' point of view? Which party responds in a way that Euripides defends? A second passage in the play supports the argument against the majority.

"In a huge army the unbridled mob and the wild sailors are hotter than fire," says Hecuba (ἐν τοι μυρίῳ στρατεύματι/ἀκόλαστος ὄχλος ναυτική τ' ἀναρχία/κρείσσων πυρός, 606-08), and she asks Talthybius to make sure that none of those lawless soldiers or sailors be allowed to touch Polyxena's dead body. The mob of men, she fears, will swarm over her daughter's dead body, and "the man who does nothing bad is considered a bad man" (κακὸς δ' ὁ μή τι δρῶν κακόν, 608). The scene that Hecuba anticipates is very similar to the one just described by Talthybius, in which a soldier is rebuked by his comrades for something that he does not do. In the first instance, a soldier is κακός because he does not carry a contribution to Polyxena's corpse (ὁ δ' οὐ φέρων); in the

second, he is κακός because he does not molest her corpse (ὁ μὴ τιδρῶν κακόν). The echo is, I think, deliberate. For while we may accept the mob's response in the first passage as conventional behavior after a successful sacrifice, the second passage changes our opinion about mob responses, however conventional they may be. We are simply appalled at the idea of soldiers molesting Polyxena's corpse, and we are sympathetic with the soldier who is faulted by the mob for not taking part in the violent and perverse activity. We are led, then, to draw an analogy between adorning Polyxena's corpse and possibly raping it. The soldier who stands out, refusing to participate in either activity, is, I think, a conscientious objector.

Polyxena's wish to be treated like a Greek hero is thwarted by the army's resolution to treat her like a woman (*a prize claimed by the hero Achilles*). Because the Greeks view her body as erotic, her words and her gestures are read not as she intended them--as a warrior's--but rather as a woman's; she is therefore treated as an erotic object both during and after her sacrifice. The decree passed by the army--that the desire asserted by the "best of the Greek men" justifies the "sacrifice of slave women"--is once again democratically confirmed.

But this decree is symbolically challenged in the second half of the play. I agree with the many critics who claim the play falls into two distinct parts, though I differ with

those who find little or no real connection between the two.⁸⁶ The second half indeed breaks with the first, insofar as a Trojan woman is no longer depicted as an object to be looked at and murdered. But murder and the act of seeing remain salient elements in the plot. Hecuba devotes herself in the second half of the play to avenging the murder of Polydorus; this has led critics to say that she has accepted her daughter's murder but refuses to accept her son's.⁸⁷ The specific punishment that Polymestor is made to suffer testifies, however, to Hecuba's memory of the horrible death her daughter died. Polyxena was slain before a crowd of Greek soldiers, and her body was bared to their objectifying gaze. Hecuba's retaliation strikes at the root of Polyxena's humiliation: by scratching out Polymestor's eyes, Hecuba wipes out the male gaze, Polyxena's symbolic oppressor. She also murders his two sons and exposes their bodies, and the king's blindness, to the suddenly empowered gaze of the Trojan women (1049-53):

ὄψη νιν αὐτίκ' ὄντα δωμάτων πάρος
 τυφλὸν τυφλῷ στείχοντα παραφόρῳ ποδί,
 παίδων τε δισσῶν σώμαθ', οὓς ἔκτειν' ἐγὼ
 σὺν ταῖσδ' ἀρίσταις Τρωιάσιν· δίκην δέ μοι
 δέδωκε. χωρεῖ δ', ὡς ὄραξ, ὄδ' ἐκ δόμων.

You will see him presently in front of the building, a blind man walking on a blind, staggering foot, and the

⁸⁶For an updated bibliography on the perceived problems in the play's structure see Segal (1990) 109 n.1. For his part, Segal argues that the thematic unity of the play "rests...on the characteristically Euripidean interconnections between war, monstrosity, barbarian violence, women, and the erotic atmosphere of Polyxena's sacrifice" (109). My reading is clearly in part compatible with Segal's.

⁸⁷For this view see Grube (1941) 221-22, and Ra'anana Meridor, "Hecuba's Revenge," *AJP* 99 (1978) 34-35.

bodies of his two children, whom I killed with these noble Trojan women; he has given me my vengeance. Here he comes, as you see, out of the building.

Thus a reversal of the play's first half is accomplished, as woman is transformed from spectacle and victim to spectator and killer. Moreover, the sign of feminine nobility accepted in the first half of the play is effaced, and Hecuba appoints a new definition: nobility is not manifest in a young woman's self-sacrifice, but is found rather in the Trojan women's accomplishment of vengeance. In other words, Hecuba applies to women the same criteria used to determine the nobility of the male warrior.

Iphigenia at Aulis

In this section I will examine the sacrifice of Iphigenia in the last sacrifice-play of Euripides produced in Athens (it was produced only after his death), the *Iphigenia at Aulis*. In the play, Agamemnon deceives his wife and daughter by representing Iphigenia's sacrifice as a marriage to Achilles (98-100); he later refers to the sacrifice as marriage to Hades (461). In Greek thought, marriage and sacrifice are structurally associated, and their homologous nature has been much studied in recent years.⁸⁸ But Euripides suggests that

⁸⁸The most influential work in this area is that of Jean-Pierre Vernant; see, e.g., his *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, tr. Janet Lloyd (NY: Zone Books, 1990; first published in 1974) esp. 151. Following Vernant in her reading of the IA is Foley (1985), esp. 84-92. See also Richard Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding," *JHS* 107 (1987) 106-30, esp. 106-07 and

there is a particular association between the sacrifice of Iphigenia and the marriage of another woman closely linked to the Trojan campaign: Helen. This association, as it is presented in the *IA*, has not yet been sufficiently explored.

The Oxford edition of the play opens with the monologue of Agamemnon.⁸⁹ Leda had three daughters, Agamemnon says: Phoibe, Clytemnestra, and Helen. Helen's name subsequently leads into the following digression (51-7):

Ἑλένη τε· ταύτης οἱ τὰ πρῶτ' ὀλβισμένοι
 μνηστῆρες ἦλθον Ἑλλάδος νεανίαι.
 δειναὶ δ' ἀπειλαὶ καὶ κατ' ἀλλήλων φόνος
 ξυνίσταθ', ὅστις μὴ λάβοι τὴν παρθένον.
 τὸ πρᾶγμα δ' ἀπόρως εἶχε Τυδάρεω πατρί,
 δοῦναί τε μὴ δοῦναί τε, τῆς τύχης ὅπως
 ἄψαιτ' ἄριστα.

...and Helen. The young men of the highest class in Greece came as her suitors. The threats were terrible, and plans to murder the other suitors were made by whoever thought he might not win the girl. The problem kept her father Tyndareus in a state of *aporia*: to give Helen and not to give her, how he could hit on the happiest circumstances.

Why does the story of Helen's courtship start the play about Iphigenia's sacrifice? Why does Agamemnon, awake in the middle of the night at Aulis, contemplating the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia, recollect the courtship of Helen? And why specifically the *courtship* of Helen and not, say, her

(on the *IA*) 108-110; and James Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 181-201, esp. 187.

⁹⁰Two prologues appear in the mss.: Agamemnon's monologue in iambics (49-114), and the dialogue between Agamemnon and the old man written in anapaests (1-48). I follow Gilbert Murray who prints Agamemnon's monologue (49-114) first, followed by 11.1-48 and 115-163. Both prologues are incomplete according to Murray. For discussion see Bernard M. W. Knox, "Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulide* 1-163 (in that order)," *YCS* 22 (1972) 239-61, and C.A.E. Luschnig, *Tragic Aporia: A Study of Euripides' Iphigenia at Aulis* (Berwick, Victoria: Aureal Publications, 1988) 6-7 and 19n.3.

abduction, or the judgement of Paris, two of the more traditional places to start the story?⁹⁰

Agamemnon is, of course, giving a very thorough aetiology of the present Greek expedition against Troy. But his account is unique, I think, in that it is told from the point of view of the *father*, Tyndareus. The murderous suitors, all desirous of Helen, were a significant problem not for Helen, it seems, but for her father Tyndareus. Whatever decision Tyndareus reached about his daughter's marriage, it would have to satisfy the mob of hot-headed suitors assembled at his door.

I believe there is a reason for Agamemnon's evocation of the courtship of Helen, and for his doing so from Tyndareus' point of view in particular. As Tyndareus once was, so Agamemnon is now in a state of *aporia*: should he sacrifice his daughter or not?⁹¹ He realizes that it is potentially dangerous not to sacrifice her. All the armies of Greece are assembled at Aulis, and if they find out that victory over Troy depends on the sacrifice of Iphigenia, they will force

⁹⁰Our only source earlier than the *IA* for the oath taken by Helen's suitors is the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (book 5.1-200). See M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure, and Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), esp. 114-19 and 133-34. In the Hesiodic version of the story, Helen's father is said to be Zeus (but West takes this statement to be corrupt; see p.43 n.25), and the oath is the suitors' own idea. Sources later than Euripides include Isocrates, *Encomium of Helen* (10.40); Apollodorus (3.132); and Hyginus (fab. 78). Usually the aetiology of the Trojan War is evoked with reference to Helen's abduction by Paris and voyage to Troy (e.g. Sappho 16; Aesch. *Ag.* 687-98; Herod. *Hist.* 1.4).

⁹¹A similar observation is made by Luschnig (1988) 73: "From the guilty name of Helen, Agamemnon proceeds to his own account of history. By his choice of words he shows the similarity of the two situations, the past...and the present crises."

him to kill her (513-14). Agamemnon is convinced that they will, in fact, find out, because either Calchas or Odysseus is certain to tell them (518-26). "Can't you picture Odysseus standing in the midst of the Greeks?" Agamemnon asks his brother Menelaus. "He will command them to kill *you, me, and my daughter*" (528-33).

As we know, Tyndareus averted the potential blood bath at his door by binding all Helen's suitors to her with an oath: the suitors promise to defend her marriage to whichever one of them she chooses to marry. Should she ever be abducted, the suitors all promise to wage war against the abductor and to destroy his city (57-65). This contract apparently satisfies the suitors and solves Tyndareus' *aporia*: in one sense, he gives Helen to all the suitors; yet in another, he does not give her, in that only one man will really possess her as his wife. This interpretation of Tyndareus' solution is faithful to the Greek phrase, *δοῦναί τε μὴ δοῦναί τε*, "to give and not to give." For while translators frequently render the phrase "to give or not to give,"⁹² E.B. England was right to insist that the real problem for Tyndareus "was not whether he should or should not give his daughter, nor even to *whom* he should give her, but how, in

⁹²W.S. Merwin and George E. Dimock, Jr., tr., *Euripides: "Iphigeneia at Aulis"* (NY: Oxford UP, 1978) 27: "Should he give her to one of them/ or not let her marry at all?" Arthur S. Way, tr. *Euripides*, vol. 1 (NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1930) 11: "Then sore perplexed was Tyndareus her sire,/ How, giving or refusing, he should 'scape/ Shipwreck..."

the giving and in the refusing, he should escape the enmity of the disappointed suitors" (England's italics).⁹³

Thus Tyndareus' *aporia* turns out to be highly relevant to Agamemnon's own immediate problem. I am not suggesting that Agamemnon himself is depicted as aware that their situations are closely related; presumably he recollects the courtship of Helen because, in his mind, it is ultimately the cause for the present expedition. What I do want to suggest, however, is that Euripides intends for us, the audience, to begin to discover for ourselves other meaningful connections between Helen's courtship and marriage on the one hand, and Iphigenia's sacrifice on the other.

To start with, the soldiers who Agamemnon fears will demand Iphigenia's sacrifice are in fact the very men who some years earlier demanded Helen's marriage and vowed subsequently to fight for her. It is significant, then, when Achilles later says that the Greeks have a *δεινὸς ἔρωσ*, a "terrible eros," for war (808-09), since the present "eros" for war against Troy springs ultimately from an earlier form of eros, the desire to marry Helen.⁹⁴ Agamemnon's choice of words likewise equates bloodlust with eros (1264-66):

μέμνηε δ' Ἀφροδίτη τις Ἑλλήνων στρατῶ
πλεῖν ὡς τάχιστα βαρβάρων ἐπὶ χθόνα,

⁹³E.B. England, ed., *The "Iphigeneia at Aulis" of Euripides* (London and NY: Macmillan and Co., 1891) loc. cit. England admits the possibility that Euripides is imitating Aeschylus' *Suppl.* 379, where ὑρᾶσαι τε μὴ δρᾶσαι τε is "to do or not to do"; but "the construction of the two passages," England maintains, "is different." See also Luschnig (1988) 112.

⁹⁴It is of course true that not exactly all of the Greeks now headed for Troy were part of the original gang of suitors; but they have all by this time been assimilated to the group. See Luschnig (1988) 41.

παῦσαί τε λέκτρων ἄρπαγὰς Ἑλληνικῶν.

Some Aphrodite has maddened the army of Greeks to sail as fast as possible to the land of foreigners, and to put an end to the rape of Greek beds.

But even if the present soldiers are like the former suitors, how is *Iphigenia* like *Helen*? *Iphigenia* is a young unmarried woman whose sacrifice is demanded by Artemis (89-91), whereas *Helen* is a married woman involved with another man and closely associated with Aphrodite (68-69). *Helen* may not appear as a character in the *IA*, but her presence is felt throughout the play, and she is mentioned several times, always pejoratively (κακὸν λέχος, 389; κακὴ γυνή, 1169). *Iphigenia*, meanwhile, is represented in the play as pure, brave, and good (1411, 1561-62).

Yet the *IA* destabilizes the traditional belief that *Helen* and *Iphigenia* are opposites, the two "faces" of woman. At the end of the play, *Iphigenia* is awarded the epithet ἐλέπτολις ("destroyer of the city," 1476, 1511), a word coined by Aeschylus in the *Agamemnon* to describe *Helen*, the "destroyer" of Troy (Ag. 689-90).⁹⁵ Two extremes thus come together paradoxically in the figure of *Iphigenia*: for she sees herself as simultaneously the savior of Greece (1383-84, 1420, 1472-73, 1502) and the destroyer of Troy.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Noted by Luschnig (1988) 85; Dimock (1978) 11-12, writes: "Euripides forces us to identify [*Iphigenia*] with *Helen*....She has become as responsible as *Helen* for the expedition to Troy, for the fall of the city, and for the miserable homecoming of the Achaians." The next question is, how much "responsibility" is it fair to attribute to *Helen*?

⁹⁶The merging of opposites is a central motif in the play; see also Dale Chant's compelling paper on "Role Inversion and its Function in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *Ramus* 15 no.2 (1986) 83-92. Every savior in the *IA*, Chant argues, is also a destroyer, and vice-versa. For example, *Agamemnon*, in the course of a single scene, goes from being *Iphigenia*'s

What, then, does Helen have to do with Iphigenia? This very question is in fact asked by Menelaus in the play (τίδ' Ἑλένης παρθένῳ τῇ σῆι μέτα; 494). I plan to address this problem by examining the affect Iphigenia has on the two principal male characters in the play, Agamemnon and Achilles.

Aristotle's remarks on the *IA* are well known. He was bothered by the apparent inconsistency between Iphigenia's first appeal to her father not to sacrifice her (μή μ' ἀπολέσης ἄωρον, 1218), and her announcement moments later that she has decided to die (καθθανεῖν μὲν μοι δέδοκται, 1375). Aristotle objected to Euripides' evident failure to demonstrate clearly in the text the reason for Iphigenia's change of mind.⁹⁷

Several scholars have defended Euripides against Aristotle's objections. G.M.A. Grube, and later George Dimock, say that Iphigenia intentionally "makes a virtue of necessity." Wesley Smith, followed by Helene Foley, argues that Iphigenia's offer to die is motivated by her newly conceived love for the hero Achilles. Meanwhile Jasper Griffin neither agrees nor disagrees with Aristotle: he admits that Euripides gives Iphigenia no apparent motive to change her mind. But why should he? "The world of the

savior to her destroyer, and Menelaus from destroyer to savior. Achilles tells Iphigenia he will stand at the altar ready to save her (1424-32), but is later reported to be an acolyte at the rite (1568-76). In the end we are never even sure whether Artemis saves Iphigenia or destroys her (Chant, 90).

⁹⁷Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454a28-33: "For the suppliant Iphigenia bears no resemblance to the later Iphigenia." See Bernard Knox, "Second Thoughts in Greek Tragedy," in *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1979) 231-49, esp. 243-46.

Iphigeneia in Aulis," writes Griffin, "is one in which everyone changes his or her mind."⁹⁸

According to Marianne McDonald, the fact that Iphigenia changes her mind shows that she is "teachable." That is, she is taught by Agamemnon that her sacrifice is necessary for the good of Greece. While McDonald acknowledges that the lesson Iphigenia learns from Agamemnon is "misguided," she nevertheless maintains that Iphigenia's unconditional devotion to her father makes her "a genuine heroine."⁹⁹

I agree with McDonald that Agamemnon misleads his daughter. It is for this reason that I protest the use of the word "teachable" to describe her, since it gives docility virtuous associations. "Teaching" implies improvement and enlightenment; yet Iphigenia is neither improved nor enlightened by her father's views. She adopts his opinions because she is young, impressionable, and committed to him. The hallmark of Iphigenia's character is neither chastity nor altruism, but her sense of filial duty toward Agamemnon.

This aspect of her character is apparent almost as soon as she arrives at Aulis. When Agamemnon accuses Iphigenia of speaking "intelligently," she sees how unhappy he is and quickly offers to speak "unintelligently" (653-54). To judge

⁹⁸Grube (1941) 437; Dimock (1978) 7; Wesley D. Smith, "Iphigenia in Love," in *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to B.M.W. Knox*, ed. G. Bowerstock, et al. (Berlin and NY: Walter De Gruyter, 1979) 173-80; Foley (1985) 77; Jasper Griffin, "Characterization in Euripides: *Hippolytus* and *Iphigeneia in Aulis*," in *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. C. Pelling (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 148. Luschnig (1988) 18, is in agreement with Griffin.

⁹⁹Marianne McDonald, "Iphigenia's *Philia*: Motivation in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *QUCC* 63 (1990) 76, 82, 81.

from this exchange, then, (which we will presently examine in detail) we see that Iphigenia is clearly affected by Agamemnon, but not at all enlightened. I suggest that the speech in which Agamemnon justifies killing his daughter, echoed later by Iphigenia herself, constitutes not "teaching," but indoctrination, and that Iphigenia's loyalty to her father therefore does not constitute heroism. She is an impressionable young woman who, as Clytemnestra remarks, loves her father (*φιλοπάτωρ*, 638).

The passage just mentioned is important to our understanding of the dynamics between Iphigenia and Agamemnon. Iphigenia has just arrived at Aulis and, seeing her father's dour mood, offers to cheer him up (651-54):

Ag. μακρὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ 'πιούσ' ἀπουσία.
 Iph. οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι φῆς, οὐκ οἶδα, φίλτατ' ἔμοι πάτερ.
 Ag. συνετὰ λέγουσα μᾶλλον εἰς οἰκτόν μ' ἄγεις.
 Iph. ἀσύνετά νυν ἐροῦμεν, εἰ σέ γ' εὐφρανῶ.

Ag. For your absence from me will be long.
 Iph. I do not understand what you are saying, father my dearest, I do not understand.
 Ag. Yet you speak with intelligence, and move me more to pity.
 Iph. Then I will speak unintelligently, if I can cheer you.

In a short while, when she learns of Agamemnon's plan to sacrifice her, Iphigenia will want her father to pity her; for now, however, still ignorant of her fate, she has no such goal. But the effect that Iphigenia's voice has on Agamemnon, and later on Achilles, is never the one that she anticipates. She may swear to Agamemnon that she does not understand what he is talking about, but he responds as if

she understood everything. Her genuine ignorance (οὐκ οἶδα) thus is taken (or mistaken) for intelligence.

Iphigenia evidently regards it as her duty to make Agamemnon smile; if she has to speak differently to bring about this result, she will. She does not understand the real meaning of her father's words, yet immediately responds to his suspicion that she sounds as if she did understand. If he complains that she sounds *συνετά*, she will speak *ἀσύνετα*. This remarkable adaptiveness gives us our first glimpse of Iphigenia, the "cheerful martyr."¹⁰⁰

This short exchange between Agamemnon and Iphigenia foreshadows the later change in Iphigenia's speech at the climax of the play. Iphigenia starts out speaking candidly; but when she sees that her speech displeases her father, she offers to reconstruct her voice in order to cheer him.

The circumstances, however, are different in their later exchange because Iphigenia now in fact does know that Agamemnon has made plans for her sacrifice. She begs him not to kill her (1211-19):

εἰ μὲν τὸν Ὀρφέως εἶχον, ὦ πάτερ, λόγον,
 πείθειν ἐπάδουσ', ὥσθ' ὀμαρτεῖν μοι πέτρας,
 κηλεῖν τε τοῖς λόγοισιν οὐς ἐβουλόμην,
 ἐνταῦθ' ἂν ἦλθον· νῦν δέ, τὰ π' ἐμοῦ σοφά,
 δάκρυα παρέξω· ταῦτα γὰρ δυναίμεθ' ἄν.
 ἱκετηρίαν δὲ γόνασιν ἐξάπτω σέθεν
 τὸ σῶμα τούμῳ, ὅπερ ἔτικτεν ἦδε σοι,
 μή μ' ἀπολέσης ἄωρον· ἡδὺν γὰρ τὸ φῶς
 βλέπειν· τὰ δ' ὑπὸ γῆς μή μ' ἰδεῖν ἀναγκάσης.

¹⁰⁰ "[N]ever was there a more vibrant, cheerful and affectionate martyr!" D.J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme, and Structure* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1967) 263.

If I had the voice of Orpheus, father, to persuade with song the stones to attend to me, and to cast spells with words over whomever I wanted, I would resort to it now. But as it is, I will offer my own art, my tears: I might discover power in them. And, like a suppliant branch, I press to your knees my body, which this woman bore to you: Do not kill me: I am too young and I find the daylight sweet to see; nor force me to look upon the things under the earth.

Earlier Iphigenia moved Agamemnon to pity without so intending. In the present passage, she uses certain conventional rhetorical tactics for arousing pathos: she claims her inexperience in the area of persuasion, and draws attention to her tears and her body, which underline her weakness and femininity. She even enlists the help (or more precisely, the helplessness) of her baby brother Orestes, though he cannot even speak (1245): ἰδοὺ σιωπῶν λίσσεταιί σ' ὄδ', ὦ πάτερ ("Look! In silence he beseeches you, father").

While these may be conventional methods of persuasion, they are more poignant than usual because Iphigenia and Agamemnon are daughter and father. She is not an Athenian citizen pleading a case before a jury of fellow citizens. She was once, as she carefully reminds him, a little girl sitting on his knee, promising to care for him in his old age (1221-30).

The earlier scene between father and daughter suggested that Agamemnon was affected with pity by Iphigenia's speech. But now, when Agamemnon's pity could save her life, Iphigenia is unable to move him at all. Agamemnon protects himself from her pleas by invoking the freedom of Greece and the inviolability of Greek marriage; his patriotic, impersonal

rhetoric serves as a defense against the personal appeal of his daughter Iphigenia (1273-75):

ἐλευθέραν γὰρ δεῖ νιν ὅσον ἐν σοί, τέκνον,
κάμοι γενέσθαι, μηδὲ βαρβάροις ὑπο
Ἑλληνας ὄντας λέκτρα συλᾶσθαι βία.

For Greece must be free, as much as it is in your power, child, and mine; and being Greeks, our beds must not be plundered forcibly by foreigners.

One might expect Iphigenia to respond resentfully to this cold argument. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* it is said that Iphigenia died with a curse on her lips; her mouth had to be gagged by the Greek soldiers in order to keep her from damning her father's house before being killed (*Ag.* 235-38). Thus Aeschylus represents Iphigenia as angry, and her voice as potentially treacherous, not unjustly treacherous either, as the sympathetic-sounding chorus implies.

But there is no need to fear Iphigenia in the *IA*. Instead of cursing her father, she essentially gives him her blessing; in fact she endorses her sacrifice in Agamemnon's own terms.¹⁰¹ Her death, she says, will stop the rape (ἀρπάζειν) of Greek women by foreign men (βάρβαροι, 1380-81); and by dying, she adds, she will free Greece (Ἑλλάδ' ὡς ἠλευθέρωσα, 1383-84). "Iphigenia accepts Agamemnon's reasoning," writes Nancy Rabinowitz, "not because Euripides thinks it is correct, but because she is emotionally--even

¹⁰¹I disagree with McDonald (1990) 78: "...the Euripidean Iphigenia may first allude to her weaker Aeschylean counterpart by refusing to be sacrificed, and then act all the more nobly when she has weighed the data and come to a more informed decision." I argue that Iphigenia's endorsement of her sacrifice in the *IA* is a stylized version of being gagged in the *Ag.* In both plays something is put in her mouth in order to ensure an auspicious sacrifice.

erotically--attached to her father."¹⁰² I would emphasize Iphigenia's *emotional* attachment to her father, for which the play gives us clear evidence. I would add, moreover, that her emotional attachment to her father leads to an intellectual dependence on him, as she apparently adopts his way of thinking. This emotional and intellectual surrender to Agamemnon leads ultimately to her death.

I am not the first to observe that Iphigenia adopts the rhetoric of her father's speech. For instance, Christina Elliott Sorum remarks that, "Iphigenia perpetuates the patriotic theme introduced by her father; she maintains his fantasy that his act is justified, that he is not responsible." According to O'Connor-Visser, "...Iphigenia has to adopt Agamemnon's arguments in order to reach the decision to die."¹⁰³ I would like to add, however, an observation that I think has not been emphasized in previous readings of the play: Iphigenia adopts the rhetoric of her father's speech because it is her aim--it is in fact her very nature--to placate him. I would emphasize also that her speech, unlike Agamemnon's, has the effect of arousing erotic and destructive impulses.

¹⁰²Nancy Rabinowitz, "The Strategy of Inconsistency in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *CB* 59 no. 2 (1983) 24.

¹⁰³Cristina Elliott Sorum, "Myth, Choice, and Meaning in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *AJP* 113 (1992) 541; O'Connor-Visser (1987) 123. See also McDonald (1990) 77; S.E. Lawrence, "Iphigenia at Aulis: Characterization and Psychology in Euripides," *Ramus* 17.2 (1988) 100, Rabinowitz (1983) 24, Siegel (1980) 301, Smith (1979) 174-75, Grube (1941) 436.

"A greater desire for your bed enters me," Achilles responds, "as I see into your true nature; for you are noble" (μάλλον δὲ λέκτρων σῶν πόθος μ' ἐσέρχεται/ ἐς τὴν φύσιν βλέψαντα· γενναία γὰρ εἶ, 1410-11). What Achilles means, of course, is that he wants to marry Iphigenia. Her apparent propensity for self-sacrifice suggests to him that she will be an excellent wife. As we know from the example set by Alcestis--"best of women" because she agrees to die in place of her husband--the ideal wife is one who would gladly lay down her life. Achilles' expression, though, is sexually suggestive. It is not simply that he wants to marry Iphigenia, but, as he puts it, he has a "greater desire for her bed." This phrasing is remarkable, and so is the fact that in this scene male sexual desire is stimulated not by a flirtatious expression or a longing look, but by a speech in which a woman embraces death. Her willingness to die evidently allows Achilles to "see" Iphigenia's "nature," although the "nature" that emerges when she endorses her sacrifice has been constructed on the spot out of her father's opinions. We can see, based on Iphigenia's prior words, that the wish to die is in fact antithetical to her nature.

It has been said that Achilles desires Iphigenia mainly because she endorses *his* point of view and "male" values. For instance, Dale Chant writes:

subsequent to Iphigeneia's speech of acquiescence in and glorification of her sacrifice (and consequential

endorsement of male values, perspectives and roles) he [Achilles] becomes overwhelmingly infatuated with her.¹⁰⁴

But the attitude that Iphigenia has adopted cannot be defined simply, in any *single* way. Her new attitude (supporting the army of Greece, the importance of Greek freedom, the glory of self-sacrifice, and the sanctity of marriage) is not solely the attitude of the play's male characters; the chorus of women also endorses all the elements of her attitude listed above: the planned military action, Greek freedom, self-sacrifice, and marriage.¹⁰⁵ It may have originated as the code of the male warrior, but by now it is the universal Greek attitude.¹⁰⁶

Achilles claims at this moment that he wants to marry Iphigenia. Who can say *precisely* why? We observe that his desire for her emerges when she has just adopted her father's views, recited Greek values, and dedicated herself to death. Whatever the source of Iphigenia's new attitude, Achilles' desire can be characterized as specifically male desire, and this, I would argue, is the point of the scene: to reveal not the nature of the ideology held by Greek men and women, but the nature and source of erotic desire in the Greek man.

Male erotic desire figures in a similar way in the *IA* and the *Hecuba*. In both plays, young unmarried women present

¹⁰⁴Chant (1986) 85. Cf. Rabinowitz (1983) 25: "In this speech, Iphigenia takes on the overt values of the patriarchy."

¹⁰⁵In the *parodos* (164-302) the chorus ogles the handsome Greek soldiers armed for battle; the next ode (543-89) is a prayer for moderation in love, or fidelity in marriage; the final ode (1510-31) celebrates (proleptically) Iphigenia's sacrifice and the coming victory of Greece.

¹⁰⁶Or almost universal. I agree with Foley (1985) 95, that Clytemnestra is the exception in the play, as the one character not supportive of "Panhellenic idealism."

themselves as ready and willing to die, and thus inadvertently elicit erotic responses from the Greek soldier(s) who watch. Polyxena literally exposes herself, baring her upper body to the men in the Greek army, who are subsequently struck by her beauty and nobility. Iphigenia, without baring her body, but by offering to be sacrificed, likewise arouses in Achilles a desire (πόθος) for her bed (λέκτρα), and admiration for her nobility.

But in addition to having his erotic response, Achilles also feels a sudden compelling desire for battle: ἄχθομαί τ'.../ εἰ μή σε σώσω Δαναΐδαισι διὰ μάχης/ ἔλθῶν ("I am in agony...unless I rescue you from the Greeks by fighting them in battle," 1413-15).¹⁰⁷ The impulses to make love to and marry a woman and to kill men surface simultaneously in Achilles, just as they did in the suitors at the time of Helen's courtship. This comparison between Helen's suitors and Achilles is observed by Iphigenia herself. She fears that, just as Helen's body is used by Greece as a reason to wage war against Troy, so Achilles might also appropriate her body as an object of desire and a cause to fight for (1417-20):

ἡ Τυνδαρίς παῖς διὰ τὸ σῶμ' ἄρκει μάχας
 ἀνδρῶν τιθείσα καὶ φόνους· σὺ δ', ὦ ξένε,
 μὴ θνήσκε δι' ἐμὲ μηδ' ἀποκτείνης τινά,
 ἔα δὲ σῶσαί μ' Ἑλλάδ', ἣν δυνώμεθα.

The daughter of Tyndareus is content that her body causes fighting and killing among men. But you, my

¹⁰⁷I borrow from Charles R. Walker's excellent translation: "I am in agony to throw/ Myself into battle with all the Greeks/ To save you," in *Euripides*, vol 4, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1959) 292.

friend, do not die because of me and do not kill anyone;
just let me save Greece if I can!

In her own mind, Iphigenia is the princess in a children's story--a fairy tale almost--where the daughter obeys her father the king and dies in order to save the people of the land. She cherishes the conventional view of Helen as a wicked woman, and fights the ironic similarity between Helen and herself. She discovers, however, that she has stepped unwittingly into an adult story of violence, passion, and destruction, in which she plays the part of *femme fatale* (which is Helen's part in the traditional story of the Trojan War) in Achilles' own erotic and heroic fantasy.

Her dying words, instead of cursing her father, blame Helen for the great pains she caused the Greek people (1315-17, 1334-35). The traditional *femme fatale* in Greek history is Helen; in Euripides, though, Iphigenia is also a "destroyer of cities." The ancient distinction between the adulteress and the virgin collapses on the late fifth-century Athenian stage.

"What does the marriage of Helen and Paris have to do with me?" (1236-37). Iphigenia returns to the question raised by Menelaus earlier in the play. We can understand their bewilderment because we, too, have long been deceived by appearances and tradition: Iphigenia and Helen really do appear to be polar opposites of one another, as do Artemis and Aphrodite. Yet somewhere beneath the surface, these two configurations of the feminine slide into one another. Both Iphigenia and Helen arouse male erotic desire and the male

desire to fight for a woman. And while both are eventually "city-destroyers," they are at first ritually "given" by their fathers (in marriage or in the act of sacrifice) in order to placate the unruly passions of men. Helen is symbolically given by Tyndareus to the noblemen of Greece who court her, and Iphigenia is given by Agamemnon (in fact *she* gives her body to Greece: δίδωμι σῶμα τούμὸν Ἑλλάδι..., 1397-99) so that the armies will not turn against him and destroy his family.¹⁰⁸

The ironic similarity between Iphigenia and Helen becomes even more striking in the play's final scene. As she walks off the stage toward the altar of Artemis where she will be sacrificed, Iphigenia declares herself ἐλέπτολις (1475-76): ἄγετέ με τὸν Ἰλίου/καὶ φρυγῶν ἐλέπτολιν ("Lead me away, the destroyer of Troy and of the Phrygians"). The chorus of Chalcidian women joins in celebrating her by this name (1510-12): ἴδεσθε τὸν Ἰλίου/καὶ φρυγῶν ἐλέπτολιν/στείχουσαν ("See the destroyer of Troy and of the Phrygians as she goes"). Not only does the first syllable of Iphigenia's new title evoke the beginning of Helen's name, but it is, as scholars have noted, the epithet coined by Aeschylus to describe Helen in the *Agamemnon*.

It is ironic that the women of the chorus are the ones who, with this word, unwittingly identify Iphigenia with Helen, because they hold religiously to the belief that there

¹⁰⁸Helen marries Menelaus, but in a sense also Greece (or at least the Greek aristocracy); Iphigenia is likewise, as noted by Rabinowitz (1983) 25, "poised between two marriages, one to Achilles, the other to Greece."

are two kinds of women: the good ones like Iphigenia, and bad women like Helen. A woman cultivates virtue, they say, by hiding her sexuality (568-70):

μέγα τι θηρεύειν ἀρετάν,
 γυναίξι μὲν κατὰ Κύπριν
 κρυπτάν...

A great thing to shoot for is virtue, which for women consists in the hiding of Aphrodite...

In their view, then, Helen is to be condemned because she left her husband and thus started the war, while Iphigenia is laudable. The women do not take into account the fact that Iphigenia is, in her own way, another woman (like Helen) who launches one thousand ships, since her sacrifice gives the Greek expedition against Troy its second start. Despite her chastity, then, and all her noble aspirations, Iphigenia is in some way a double for Helen, however unchaste and ignoble Helen may traditionally seem.

In the Greek literary tradition, Iphigenia and Helen represent the distinction between pure and impure womanhood respectively. But Euripides' *IA* shows that at some level these opposites merge, because they both trigger erotic and warrior impulses. The only justification for exalting Iphigenia and condemning Helen is, then, the characteristically Greek habit of structuring the world in terms of binary oppositions: the good and the bad; the noble and the ignoble; the virgin and the whore.

Part Three

Before the *Heroides*: The Male Love Poet's "Death"

"I am miserable, prostrate with desire, dead...."

Archilochus, in one of the earliest fragments of archaic Greek love poetry that we have, is "dead" with desire, having been "pierced through the bones" with invisible arrows shot by the gods.¹ While he is clearly not "dead" in the sense that a fallen warrior in the *Iliad* might be, he is the first known poet to use epic language in a poem about erotic desire, and to write about what is ostensibly his own experience. He is the first poet, in other words, to present himself and love as the subjects of poetry. By appropriating the images of physical wounding and death from heroic poetry, Archilochus gives the genre of personal love poetry a certain gravity.

Thus the traditional link between love and death in love poetry may have been originally conceived as a way of establishing subjective love poetry as a serious genre next to epic poetry. The figure of love as death enables a poet to depict erotic experience in epic proportions, as it were, without, however, requiring him to conform to the standards of epic poetry. Even in the Hellenistic period, among poets

¹δύστηνος ἔγκειμαι πόθῳ/ ἄψυχος, χαλεπήσι θεῶν ὀδύνησιν ἔκητι/ πεπαρμένος δι' ὀστέων, fr. 104 in Campbell (1982) 7.

who thoroughly rejected the epic style, erotic desire is often treated as a tragic death. In the first *Idyll* of Theocritus, for example, the whole countryside mourns the "death," that is the love, of Daphnis; the scene of universal mourning in this poem is reminiscent of nothing less than the lamentation for Hector that closes the *Iliad*. However much the love poet may repudiate poetry written in the grand style, and however "thin" his own poetry may be, he nevertheless maintains the principle that, in order to be superior poetry, a poem about love must be infused with tragedy. A love affair, a paltry topic in comparison with war, thus comes to be treated figuratively as a "death."

Death may be a prominent figure in serious Greek love poetry, but it appears to be a colloquialism in the lover's vocabulary in Rome. Our evidence for this comes from Plautine comedy: characters in Plautus commonly say that they are dying, *pereo* ("I die"), when they mean that they are in love.² As we know, the plots of Roman comedy are generally involved with the love affairs, not the deaths, of young men. Thus the word *pereo* is only ever used in comedy in a purely figurative sense.

In contrast with Plautus, Ovid's *Heroides* might appear tragic: love is still the subject, but in this work, death might not be just a figure of speech. In almost every one of the single-letter *Heroides*, an abandoned heroine writes to her lover wishing or threatening to die, making the rhetoric

²Pl. *Mer.*218, 444; *Poen.*142.

of female self-destruction a major unifying theme in the work.

Thus, in addition to inheriting the traditional poetic rhetoric which equates love with death, Ovid also accepts (and develops) in the *Heroides* another well-established association, linking self-destruction and the feminine. This tradition, as I demonstrated in Parts One and Two, originates in the *Iliad* and is developed in Euripides' sacrifice plays. Before turning to the *Heroides*, I will sharpen the contrast between these two poetic traditions by examining in some detail the various uses of death as a figure for the male love poet's erotic feelings in Latin love poetry before the *Heroides*.

In the *Heroides*, the heroines imagine death as a form of punishment for either themselves or their lovers. But in Latin love poetry before the *Heroides*, death has several different connotations, some of which are positive: death serves as a trope for feelings of love or desire; the moment of death is associated with the act of making love; and on at least one occasion, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid (in the *Amores*) each expounds the view that lovers, unlike ordinary men, transcend death, or enjoy a transcendent death. Some of these metaphorical meanings of death in Latin love poetry will be illustrated with examples below; after presenting the evidence for the range and versatility of the subject of death in Latin poetry in general, I will focus on Propertius' treatment of the subject in Books 1-3, for purposes of comparison with Ovid's in the *Heroides*.

I mentioned already the use of the word *pereo* as an expression of love in Plautus; its presence in Roman comedy suggests that *pereo* might be a colloquial expression in real life. It occurs in a figurative sense also in Catullus: Catullus 45 contains a brief lovers' dialogue composed in the tradition of amoebian song; it is a competition of words, that is, between the lovers Acme and Septimius, in which each speaker tries to surpass the other's declaration of love. Septimius says, "I am prepared to go on loving you constantly through all the years, to the greatest extent that a man is

able to die of love" (*amare porro/ omnes sum assidue paratus annos,/ quantum qui pote plurimum perire*, 45.3-5). Here *perire* magnifies *amare*, with which it is parallel. Acme will be hard pressed to cap *plurimum perire*, and Septimius chooses his words for precisely this reason.

The verb *pereo* is said to be one of Propertius' favorites, occurring twenty-nine times in his four books of poems.³ He describes several men, including himself, as "dying of love"; it is interesting to note, however, that while men are often said to *perire* because of a woman, Propertius never speaks of women as "dying of love" for men. Instead he identifies women as the cause of men's "deaths." "Paris himself is said to have died of love for Helen when she came naked out of Menelaus' bedroom" (*ipse Paris nuda fertur periisse Lacaena,/ cum Menelaeourgeret e thalamo*, 2.15.13-14). Men are also infatuated by women's physical features: Propertius says that he is made to *perire* by Cynthia's eyes (*[lumina] quis ego nunc pereo*, 1.15.41). In another poem he refers to several other female attributes which cause him to *perire* (*sunt maiora, quibus, Basse, perire iuvat*, 1.4.12), such as a woman's complexion, her artistic accomplishments, and *gaudia*, a euphemism perhaps for the parts of a woman's body which are particularly arousing to him (13-14). In all of these passages, the word *pereo* seems

³L. Richardson, Jr., *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 1977) ad 2.15.13: "The verb is a favorite of P...."; Occurrences of *perire* are counted by Robert J. Baker, "Laus in amore mori: Love and Death in Propertius," *Latomus* 29 (1970) 670.

to refer to the subject's sexual arousal or desire. But elsewhere in Propertius, "dying" (*morior*, not *pereo*) is a metaphor for actually making love. "I saw you dying in your girlfriend's embrace, Gallus," says the poet (*te complexa morientem, Galle, puella/ vidimus*, 1.10.5-6). This passage plainly refers to watching Gallus in the act of making love to a woman, not merely desiring her.

On a linguistic level, then, death is one of the common figures for male love in Latin love poetry. While this figure may be said to be an element in the rhetoric of Latin love poetry, I would like to underline the important distinction between the figure of death as conventional poetic discourse, and Ovid's incorporation of the death-wish into the *discourse of persuasion* that is employed by heroines writing to their lovers in the *Heroides*. When it appears in the discourse of Latin love poetry, death is a trope used by the poet in communication with us, the readers; if the reader is familiar with the conventions of Latin love poetry, he or she recognizes *pereo* in this context as a trope with relevance to love and language, not actually to life and death. Images of death and dying may be present as metaphors in Latin love poetry of the first century B.C.E., but only in the *Heroides* might such images have literal significance.⁴ That is, in the

⁴See Gordon Williams, *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980) x-xi, on the distinction between "poetry of immediate impact" (also called "rhetorical poetry") and "poetry of meditation." The former, writes Williams, is written for public performance and is characteristic of Ovid, whereas every other major poetic work from Catullus' time to Horace's is of the opposite sort, "a private act of communication with an individual reader who responded to

context of a letter sent by the heroine to her lover, *pereo* might mean literally, "I am dying." But what other meanings might it have? When we turn to the *Heroides*, this is the question we will ask.

The heroine wants her lover to believe that she might truly die if he does not come back to her. Her words, then, increase the literal sense of death and the immediate impact of the letter. But the convention in Latin love elegy is the opposite: to diminish the literal sense of death by using "death" in a figurative sense--by converting it, that is, into a figure for love.⁵ The elegist thus manipulates death from a superior position, while the heroine does so from an inferior one. Death represents despair, need, and the end of love in the *Heroides*; in the *Amores*, on the other hand, Ovid imagines *his* death as a triumphant and joyous moment. A soldier's life is epitomized by his death in battle, according to Ovid, and a merchant's by drowning at sea; for

the fullest extent of his literary capacities." Might the *Heroides* mark the transition between these two stages of Roman poetry? For while they are written in the same code as earlier love poetry, in which the poet "could say one thing and mean another," the heroines' principal goal is to make an impact by convincing the lover that they mean precisely what they say. Cf. Harold Bloom's distinction between "rhetoric as persuasion" and "rhetoric as a system of tropes," in his critique of deconstructionist theory in *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1977) esp. 385-88. Deconstructionists, writes Bloom, "attempt to see poetry as being a conceptual rhetoric, and nothing more. Rhetoric, considered as a system of tropes, yields much more readily to analysis than does rhetoric considered as persuasion..." (386).

⁵The contrast between the fate of Daphnis in Theocritus *Idyll* 1, and that of Gallus in Virgil *Eclogue* 10, highlights this particularly figurative sense of death in Latin love poetry. Both Daphnis and Gallus are said to be wasting away because of love; but whereas Daphnis dies at the end of *Idyll* 1, Gallus simply leaves his native woods, and goes on singing about his love for Lycoris. "Dying" in this context appears to be a figure for singing in the elegiac mode.

himself Ovid prays for a death suited to the character of a lover (*Amores* 2.10.35-38):

at mihi contingat Veneris languescere motu,
 cum moriar, medium solvar et inter opus;
 atque aliquis nostro lacrimans in funere dicat:
 "conveniens vitae mors fuit ista tuae!"

...but I hope that I become weak with love's motions
 when I die, and that I am released in the middle of the
 act; and I want someone weeping at my funeral to
 comment, "That death of yours suited your life!"

Ovid first goes against convention by using "I die," in an elegiac poem about love, to mean literally "I die." But then he instructs the people living after him to interpret the literal death of the poet as a symbol for his mode of life, specifically his love life. In the end, then, the phrase *ista mors* has more than one referent, denoting on a literal level the poet's actual death, but suggesting figuratively the lover's orgasm.

Death serves as a metaphor for the lover's way of life also in Tibullus 1.3, though unlike Ovid, Tibullus does not anticipate the mode in which he is going to die, but rather the experience of the afterlife. The two poets share the view that, because love is their principal occupation in life, they will not suffer death like ordinary men. Ovid, we saw, dreams of death and orgasm coinciding. Tibullus envisions the erotic experience lasting even longer than the moment of death (1.3.57-66):

sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,
 ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios.
 hic choreae cantusque vigent, passimque vagantes
 dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves;
 fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros

floret odoratis terra benigna rosis;
 ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis
 ludit, et adsidue proelia miscet amor.
 illic est, cuicumque rapax Mors venit amanti,
 et gerit insigni myrtea sarta coma.

But because I always yield to tender Love, Venus herself will lead me into the Elysian Fields. Here lively dancing and singing flourish, everywhere free-ranging birds sound their sweet song from their tender throats; the uncultivated field produces aromatic marjoram, and across all the farmland the kind earth blossoms with fragrant roses; a row of young men mingled with tender girls plays games, and desire constantly merges them in battles. In this place is any lover whom Death's grasp has reached, and he wears myrtle wreaths upon his distinguished head.

Both this passage and the one above from Ovid's *Amores* begin with the words, "but as for me..." (*at mihi, sec̄ me*); the phrase each time prepares us to learn why this man, the poet's persona, is distinguished from the others. The distinction that Tibullus enjoys is the privilege of having Venus herself escort him into the Elysian Fields when he dies; that Venus protects lovers from the trials and tribulations of ordinary human life, including therefore death, is one of the commonplace topics of Latin love poetry.⁶ Both Tibullus and Ovid thus exempt themselves from the rules governing ordinary mortal life, by claiming that, as lovers, they are superior to other men; as a result, they expect death will permit them to prolong life's erotic pleasures. The perpetuity of the lover's erotic pleasure (*amores*) is clearly a figure for the love poet's immortality through his work (*Amores*).

⁶Williams (1980) 103. See, e.g., Propertius 3.16.20: *exclusis fit comes ipsa Venus*.

Propertius 2.27 sharpens the contrast between the mortality of ordinary men and the immortality of lovers. He addresses the poem's first ten lines to "you mortal men," *vos mortales*, an imperious phrase which implies that the poet (*ego*) speaks as one who is not mortal. He describes "you mortals" as seeking to "know the uncertain hour of death, and by what path death is going to come; you want to know the very things that the Phoenicians divined from a clear sky, including which star bodes well to man and which brings bad luck!" (1-4). Propertius then continues in a Horatian mode (cf. *Odes* 1.11), reflecting that astrology is useless since, he says, "we" (*vos* is exchanged for *nos*) court danger blindly, without knowing what will eventually kill "us": "Whether we track the Parthians on foot, or the Britons in ships, both on sea and land the dangers in our way are invisible" (5-6). The poet's use of the first person plural seems to be ironic here, since the way of life that he describes in these lines is one that elegists like himself typically repudiate.⁷ The discrepancy in the poem between *vos* and *nos* needs to be resolved.

In the second half of the poem, we learn that lovers enjoy the privilege of knowing precisely what it is that "you mortals" seek in vain to know (11-12):

*solus amans novit, quando periturus et a qua
morte, neque hic Boreae flabra neque arma timet.*

⁷Baker (1970) 672: "Propertius momentarily and ironically includes himself among the generality of danger-prone common man...."

Only a lover knows when he is going to die and by what death, nor does he fear gusts from the north or arms.

A "dead" lover, the poem concludes, has only to hear his girlfriend calling him back, and he comes back to life (*si modo clamantis revocaverit aura puellae, / concessum nulla lege redibit iter*, 15-16).

What is the force of *periturus* in line 11?⁸ I take the view that *periturus* is used in an erotic sense, whereby the lover's "death" refers to his orgasm. A lover "dies" making love, but then recovers his potency, or "comes again" (*redibit*), when his mistress calls on him for more.⁹

While death in Latin love poetry serves as a figure for a male falling in love, being in love, and making love, in the *Heroides*, as we soon will see, Ovid uses the death-wish as a unifying motif. Variety (*variatio*) is one of the informing principles in Latin elegy; a poet wishes to die in one poem, for example, but then professes to be immortal in another.¹⁰ But in the *Heroides*, Ovid does not vary either the theme or the language of the poetry from one letter to the next. The constant refrain of the heroines writing to their

⁸Kenneth Quinn, *Latin Explorations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) 186, interprets death in these verses as a figure for unrequited love: a lover knows that he will be shut out by his mistress, and that he will wait for her to call him back. Rejection would be comparable to death from a lover's perspective.

⁹The erotic sense of *periturus* was first suggested to me by Patricia Rosenmeyer; the reading presented here was finally arrived at after discussion with Gordon Williams. Contrast Baker (1970) 670-98, esp. 682-84, for a literal reading of *periturus*.

¹⁰Cf. Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, tr. David Pellauer (Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1988), 4: "...Roman erotic elegy resembles a montage of quotations and cries from the heart....Above all else, the poet seems to seek variety."

lovers is, in summary, *I will die if you do not come back to me*. Each heroine, from Penelope in the first letter to Sappho in the last, is a woman abandoned by the man she loves: the end of the love affair, and of the heroine's life, appear to be close at hand. As a whole, then, the collection of letters fails to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; Ovid charts a circular course that, instead of moving in a line from point A to point B, is coiled like a spring around a single point, the desired but absent male lover. Narrative is virtually non-existent; or what narrative there is--the narrative of the abandoned woman--fails to advance in the way that we expect it might; it is as if the same story were being rehearsed fifteen times, each time in a different female voice. Most scholars consider the repetitiousness of the *Heroides* their greatest flaw,¹¹ as if Ovid did not have, as I will argue that he does, a particular point to make through the use of repetition, circularity, and identity.

This lack of movement and variation in a collection of elegiac love poems is highly unconventional. Consider, as a counterexample, the poetry of Tibullus: Book One of Tibullus contains a mixture of love poems, some of them written for the poet's mistress Delia (1, 2, 3, 5, 6), others for a boy named Marathus (4, 8, 9); Book Two, on the other hand,

¹¹See, for example, E.J. Kenney, "Love and Legalism: Ovid, *Heroides* 20 and 21," *Arion* 9 (1970) 388-414: "The first fourteen epistles...suffer from a fundamental identity of situation which, however ingenious the variations introduced by the resourceful poet, manifests itself in a fatiguing monotony of tone and treatment. It must be an unusual reader who does not confess to the onset of boredom by the time he has reached the tenth epistle or thereabouts" (389).

contains love poems written for a new mistress named Nemesis, and the change of address suggests that the poet has left one mistress for another. Moreover, Books One and Two both contain elegies that are not about Tibullus' love affairs at all, such as the poem written in honor of Messalla's birthday (1.7). In Ovid's *Amores* (originally published before the *Heroides*; the revised edition appeared after the *Heroides*), change and variation are the principles that ultimately provide closure to the collection; for, while he embraces love and elegy in the opening poem (1.1), he rejects both of them in the closing one (3.15), anticipating instead the composition of epic poetry, the genre he initially refused to write.

Variation in Propertius' treatment of the theme of death provides closure to Books 1-3. Death is a recurring theme throughout the collection. In poem 1.19 Propertius imagines that Cynthia will not be still in love with him when he dies: the thought of her attending his funeral with indifferent feeling worries him more than the thought of death itself, he says. In one poem Propertius imagines his tomb as a monument visited by all the young men who appreciate his love poetry (1.7.23-24); in another he gives Cynthia detailed instructions regarding the arrangements for his funeral (2.13); later he says it is glorious to die in love (2.1.47). Yet in the penultimate poem of Book 3, Propertius ceases to contemplate death; instead he compares himself to a sailor who has just been delivered from death on the high

seas and now thanks heaven that he is alive (3.24). The poet's new resolution to recover his health and to cease dwelling morbidly on thoughts of death, marks the distinct end both of the affair with Cynthia and of the third book of poems. This reversal of direction, from sickness and death toward health and life, serves also as the culmination and end of the collection as a whole. The three books are unified chiefly by the poet's preoccupation with Cynthia, and in a minor way by the nexus between love and death.¹² In the first poem of Book One, Propertius compares falling in love with Cynthia to enslavement (*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis*, 1.1.1) and madness (*nullo consilio*, 1.1.6); in the last poems of Book Three, he describes being emancipated and returned to sanity. In the body of the work, a range of feelings and experiences relevant to the poet's affair is described, among which is featured the occasional wish to die. But at the end of the collection, which is to say the end of the affair, Propertius is healed (*vulneraque ad sanum nunc coiere mea*), and we celebrate with him the conclusion of both his love affair and his poetic masterpiece. It is common in the Augustan age to end a collection of poems on such a note of triumph (e.g. Horace's *Odes* 1-3; Ovid's *Amores*), a tradition that makes the *Heroides* even more exceptional. For the collection of single letters (*Heroides* 1-15) ends neither

¹²On the unity of Books 1-3 ("conceived as a single unit to be published and read as a whole") see Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 479-95. Williams' views are modified by John A. Barsby, "The Composition and Publication of the First Three Books of Propertius," *G&R* 21 (1974) 128-37.

triumphantly nor even conclusively, but the final lines of the collection depict Sappho writing to Phaon of her plan to jump from the Leucadian rock (*hoc saltem miserae crudelis epistula dicat, / ut mihi Leucadiae fata petantur aquae!* *Her.* 15.219-20).¹³ The letters stop there, at a climactic moment; there is no denouement. The reader is thus left hanging, with Sappho, on a high point that ends abruptly.

Propertius may be determined to live at the end of Book 3, but at several places earlier in Books 1-3, he contemplates the possibility of dying.¹⁴ His interest in the subject of death has been deemed noteworthy by many scholars; R.O.A.M. Lyne writes: "Throughout his work Propertius exhibits a preoccupation, even an obsession, with death. Thoughts of his own death and burial frequently intrude into unobvious contexts."¹⁵ Georg Luck notes in particular that Propertius "likes to dwell with a kind of morbid pleasure on the physical details of decomposition."¹⁶ Propertius thus pursues the subject of death in some of the ways that Ovid later does in the *Heroides*. We will shortly see that the *Heroides* in fact bear certain traces of Propertian

¹³These lines will be discussed in the context of Sappho's letter below.

¹⁴The studies devoted to the subject of love and death in Propertius are Theodore D. Papanghelis, *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987); Baker (1970); Agnes Kirsopp Michels, "Death and Two Poets," *TAPA* 86 (1955) 160-179. For shorter discussions see Lyne (1980) 66, 101-02, 141-43; Georg Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1959) 119-22; and Betty Radice, introduction, *Propertius: The Poems*, tr. W.G. Shepherd (NY: Viking Penguin, 1985) 21-23.

¹⁵Lyne (1980) 141.

¹⁶Luck (1959) 119; Luck's examples are 1.19.6, 18; 2.13.42, 57f.; 3.13.21f; 4.5.3f; 4.7.93f; 4.11.20, 37, 74.

influence.¹⁷ But however distinct the verbal and thematic allusions to Propertius, it is the tone in which they are written that separates the *Heroides* from any predecessor: the heroines sustain a passionate tone of commitment to death throughout the collection. The subject of death arises frequently in Propertius, and sometimes Propertius even says that he would like to die. Yet this is not his only attitude toward death, but one of many: at the end of his work, as I have emphasized already, Propertius is grateful to be alive.

One of the observations made by Agnes Kirsopp Michels is that Propertius' attitude toward death varies sometimes even within a single poem.¹⁸ We can mark such changes in Propertius 2.15, for instance: Propertius first urges his mistress to undress immediately and make love with him as she did last night, because death will inevitably put an end to such nights (*dum nos fata sinunt, oculos satiemus amore:/ nox tibi longa venit, nec reditura dies, 2.15.23-24*).¹⁹ Only a few lines later, however, it is said that true love never ends (*errat, qui finem vesani quaerit amoris:/ verus amor nullum novit habere modum, 2.15.29-30*). In fact, he goes on to say,

¹⁷Three poems in Propertius' Book 4 are written either entirely or almost entirely in the female voice: 4.3 (Arethusa writes to her husband Lycotas), 4.7 (Cynthia's ghost addresses Propertius), and 4.11 (the ghost of Cornelia speaks to her husband Paullus). There has been much worthwhile speculation regarding the possible influence of the Arethusa elegy on the *Heroides*. The nexus of love, death, and the female voice exists in all three poems, though. On the question of Propertian influence in Ovid's love elegies, see K. Morgan, *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the "Amores"* (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

¹⁸Michels (1955) 178.

¹⁹Cf. Catullus 5, especially vss.5-6: *nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, / nox est perpetua una dormienda.*

if she grants him many nights of love, he will become immortal (*si dabit haec multas [sc. noctes], fiam immortalis in illis*, 2.15.39). But in the poem's closing couplet, Propertius returns to the idea that death might come tomorrow, even to those of us who make love today (*sic nobis, qui nunc magnum spiramus amantes, / forsitan includet crastina fata dies*, 2.15.53-54). Poetic closure is thus achieved through the use of ring composition.²⁰

This poem is illustrative of the way in which Propertius adapts the theme of death to fit his changing moods.²¹ He is confident one moment that his love for Cynthia will last forever, but a sense of fate creeps over him in the next, persuading him of his own mortality or of the transient nature of love. His changing feelings about death are almost an index to his changing feelings about love. So it is that as his status with Cynthia alters in the course of their affair (and of the poetry collection), we detect a comparable change in his attitude toward death. Death is desirable when things are going badly with the couple; it is undesirable when their affair either is going well or has ended.

²⁰Williams (1980) 102ff. puts Prop. 2.15 in a class of poems marked by "a more sophisticated form of thematic anticipation" than ring composition (he calls this technique Anticipation by Synchdoche e sequentibus praecedentia). He explains, "The theme of death is no sooner raised than it is immediately extinguished by the context. It only finds full satisfaction in lines 49-54" (105).

²¹See also Propertius 1.19, with commentary by Lyne (1980' 141: "Propertius proceeds from belief in love transcending death to tacit acceptance that this belief is, even if true, irrelevant and unhelpful." Lyne goes on to observe generally that Propertius "likes his poems to reproduce psychological uncertainty or vacillation" (144).

In 2.17 Propertius is unhappy about the present state of his affair with Cynthia. This poem is important to my thesis because, as I will argue below, Ovid appears to allude to it in *Heroides* 2, Phyllis' letter to Demophoon. The subject of Propertius' poem is Cynthia's infidelities, which cause the poet pain and inspire him with thoughts of suicide. The lover's complaint about his partner's infidelity is a typical scenario in Latin love elegy. In this regard, the *Heroides* fits well into the elegiac tradition. But Propertius 2.17 also shares certain language and ideas with the *Heroides* that are not typical of Latin elegy. One of these is Propertius' assertion that his death will be caused by his unfaithful mistress: "To pretend we have a date, to lead on your lover with promises, this will be to have bloodstained hands!" (*Mentiri noctem, promissis ducere amantem, / hoc erit infectas sanguine habere manus!* 2.17.1-2). Similar indictments, we will see, are made by several of Ovid's heroines. In the *Heroides*, it is also common to confront the unfaithful lover with more explicit thoughts about suicide. Propertius does this first, turning later in 2.17 to address Cynthia directly: "Now throwing my body from a cruel rock is a pleasure, faithless woman, and taking ground poison in my hands" (*nunc iacere e duro corpus iuvat, impia, saxo, / sumere et in nostras trita venena manus*, 13-14). It appears that Ovid had this couplet in mind when he composed the following lines, in the voice of Phyllis writing to her lover Demophoon (*Heroides* 2.131-34, 139-42):

Est sinus adductos modice falcatus in arcus;
 ultima praerupta cornua mole rigent.
 Hinc mihi suppositas immittere corpus in undas
 mens fuit--et quoniam fallere pergis, erit.

Saepe venenorum sitis est mihi, saepe cruenta
 traiectam gladio morte perire iuvat.
 Colla quoque, infidis quia se nectenda lacertis
 praebuerunt, laqueis implicuisse iuvat.

There is a bay, gently curved into the shape of a drawn bow; the points of the horns rise erect from a sheer mass of rock. From here it was my intention to let my body fly into the waves below; and since you continue to deceive me, it will be my intention.

I am often thirsty for poison; often it is a pleasure to die a bloody death, impaled on a sword. My neck also (because it let itself be embraced by unfaithful arms) it is a pleasure to wrap in a noose.

Propertius uses the impersonal construction with *iuvat* once, to identify the two methods of suicide that he enjoys: *It is a pleasure to fall from a height and take poison*. In *Heroides* 2, the images of death drawn by Propertius are recalled as Phyllis contemplates "throwing [her] body" from a cliff, and says that she thirsts for poison. These images are then followed by a distinct verbal allusion to *iuvat* in Propertius' poem. With each repetition of *iuvat* in Phyllis' letter, a new mode of suicide is described: *It is a pleasure to stab myself*, she writes; *it is also a pleasure to hang myself*. Ovid's verses ask to be compared with Propertius', and on comparison it must be noted that Phyllis gets double as much pleasure from dying as Propertius does (*iuvat, iuvat*), and that she can name twice as many ways of killing herself. Her descriptions are more elaborate, her obsession

is more intense; she is going to die more certainly than Propertius is. What a thrilling victory!²²

The victory of Phyllis over "Propertius" (or Ovid's victory over Propertius?) is thus assured. But it was, we realize, a foregone conclusion since, in the last two lines of 2.17, Propertius seems to abandon the idea of killing himself. This is one of the sudden shifts in his attitude toward death that are so typical of the poet. The suicidal impulses that have created the mood of the poem thus far are washed away in its closing couplet by a wave of confidence that Cynthia will come back repentant: "But in spite of the circumstances, I will refrain from replacing my mistress: then she will weep, when she realizes my faithfulness" (*quod quamvis ita sit, dominam mutare cavebo:/ tum flebit, cum in me senserit esse fidem*, 2.17.17-18). Propertius appears to have decided not to punish Cynthia by killing himself or finding a new mistress.

In 2.17, then, Propertius passes out of his suicidal mood and moves on. The wish to die is presented as an intrinsic part of the cycle of events in his ongoing affair with Cynthia: the feeling may be indulged temporarily because Propertius has faith (*fides*) in Cynthia's contrition,

²²It is reminiscent of the sense of victory apparently enjoyed by Euripides' self-sacrificing heroines, who vaunt their superiority as they die. In recent American poetry, perhaps the most notable competitor in this area is the voice of Sylvia Plath boasting in "Lady Lazarus":

Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.

Ariel (New York: Harper and Row, 1961) 7.

the next stage in the cycle. Another meaning of *fides* is confidence. The poem may make death its central subject because it is confident, in a sense, that its final lines will reject death, as Propertius is confident at heart that *she will weep when she sees my faith*. For Phyllis in the *Heroides*, however, such faith or confidence is impossible, since literary tradition has already written that her story ends in death: her lover Demophoon returns too late to save her from killing herself.

Propertius is the author of his own "ending," and it entails recovery, not death. At the end of Book 3, and of his affair with Cynthia, Propertius has evidently been rejected; in response, though, he does not choose death, but is committed rather to recovering from love, as from a disease.²³ He decides to leave Rome (and Cynthia) and travel to Athens, where intellectual work will cure his lovesickness (3.21). If he dies in Athens, then he will die from natural causes, not from love (*seu moriar, fato, non turpi fractus amore*, 3.21.33). A few poems later, we see that the cure has brought about the desired effect (3.24); Propertius now speaks of his affair with Cynthia as a dangerous sea voyage from which he has successfully returned (3.24.15-20):

ecce coronatae portum tetigere carinae,
 traiectae Syrtes, ancora iacta mihi est.
 nunc demum vasto fessi resipiscimus aestu,

²³Cf. Catullus 8, in which the poet instructs himself to be sensible about his mistress' recent rejection of him, and to "endure" (*nunc iam illa non volt: tu quoque impotens noli, / nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, / sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura*, 9-11); in poem 76, he prays that the gods will cure him of love.

vulneraque ad sanum nunc coiere mea.
 Mens Bona, si qua dea es, tua me in sacraria dono!
 exciderant surdo tot mea vota Iovi.

Behold! crowned with wreaths my ship has reached port, the Syrtes have been traversed, my anchor has been let down. Now, at last, and weary from the vast and stormy sea, I have come to my senses, and now my wounds have knitted back to health. Sound Mind, if you are a goddess, I dedicate myself to your sanctuary! So many of my prayers had fallen on Jupiter's deaf ears.

In a reversal of the traditional claim made by love poets that Venus is their guardian and savior, Propertius here dedicates himself to the goddess Mens, "Mind," who has rescued him from love. We are reminded by this that he went to Athens hoping that intellectual experience would cure him of his love for Cynthia. Thus love does not ultimately kill Propertius; he is rescued from love by reason.

In the *Amores*, Ovid likewise uses reason as a weapon against love and death. "No love is of such great value-- begone, quiver-bearing Cupid!--that I should so often pray to die" (*Nullus amor tanti est (abeas, pharetrate Cupido), / ut mihi sint totiens maxima vota mori*, 2.5.1-2). Do the heroines have recourse to reason in the *Heroides*? Are they engaged in the same struggle as Propertius and Ovid, who fight off love and death and secure their independence in the end? The heroines, I argue, are fighting a different battle: they struggle not to overcome their erotic obsessions, but to *win back* the men they love; to be *dependent*, not independent. The death-wish is one of the weapons in this struggle, but it has the potential to backfire: it is at once a rhetorical

statement made for effect, and an ironic foreshadowing of the heroine's death.

Death-Wishes in the *Heroides*

As we turn now to the *Heroides*, let us keep in mind the image of Propertius fervidly reading Greek literature and philosophy at the end of his third book of poetry. In the reading of the *Heroides* put forth in the following pages, I will compare the study of Greek letters undertaken by Propertius at the end of his affair with Cynthia to the actual writing of letters by Ovid's abandoned heroines. Just as Propertius sets out to *learn*--in a setting clearly associated with learning and instruction--how to cope reasonably with a broken heart, so the abandoned heroines seek instruction in the care of their own broken hearts. But rather than turning away from their lovers--as Propertius turns away from Cynthia in favor of the classical Greek authors--the heroines in fact look *toward* their lovers expectantly as a potential source of reason and strength. I claim that the heroines' desire for guidance and correction is revealed in their letters. However, it is not always *plainly* revealed. One of the ways it is *indirectly* conveyed is through the wish to die. I will argue that the heroine's death-wish in the *Heroides* is a rhetorical strategy designed to compel the lover to come back and *correct* her, *reason* with her, and *teach* her that death is *not* the solution. The explicit death-wish is an implicit wish to be asked to live.

In 3.21 Propertius announces his intention to travel to Athens in order to forget his love for Cynthia in the study of Greek philosophy and letters. Shortly thereafter, in poem 3.24, it is clear that his Greek studies have in fact effected a change in his feelings for Cynthia. The authors he had gone to Athens to read (Plato, Epicurus, Demosthenes, and Menander) do not, of course, explicitly instruct the lovelorn; their writings are not didactic in the sense that, say, Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* is. Yet Propertius approaches the texts as if they were, in a way, remedial: love has deranged him and he says that reading Plato will *animum emendare*, correct his mind or spirit.¹ In the final poems of Propertius Book 3, love is a state of ignorance or neurosis for which a course of reading classical texts is prescribed as corrective therapy. We might also note that Propertius insists on taking instruction in the actual city of Athens, as if it were a holy land or sacred place known to have an "improving" effect on its visitors.

Ovid, meanwhile, offers his readers advice on how to cure themselves of love in the *Remedia Amoris*, a manual of instruction, as it were, written principally for "young men who have been deceived" by love: *Ad mea, decepti iuvenes, praecepta venite* (*Rem. Am.* 41). The poem's objective, as Ovid states in the preface, is to guide not only men, but--

¹Prop. 3.21.25-28: *illic vel stadiis animum emendare Platonis/ incipiam aut hortis, docte Epicure, tuis;/ persequar aut studium linguae, Demosthenis arma,/ liborumque tuos, docte Menandre, sales.*

Ovid adds--women, in the project of successfully ending their love affairs without ending their lives (*Rem. Am.* 15-19):

at si quis male fert indignae regna puellae,
 ne pereat, nostrae sentiat artis opem.
 cur aliquis laqueo collum nodatus amator
 a trabe sublimi triste pependit onus?
 cur aliquis rigido fodit sua pectora ferro?

But if someone is painfully enduring the rule of an unworthy girl, let him not die; let him feel the power of my art. Why has any lover, with a noose knotted around his neck, hung his heavy burden from a high beam? Why has anyone dug into his breast with merciless iron?

Thus in the *Remedia* Ovid expounds the view that, while suicide may often be linked to romantic despair, lovers should instead read his poem and live.

But Ovid has already written a very different work concerning the connection between eros and suicide--the *Heroides*. In these fictional letters, he assumes the voices and perspectives of lovelorn women, and in so doing he composes a study of sorts in the suicidal impulses--or suicidal rhetoric--generated by romantic despair. Together the letters form a catalogue of death-wishes; parts of individual letters are themselves such catalogues. "I am often thirsty for poison," Phyllis writes in *Heroides* 2, "often it is my pleasure to die a bloody death, impaled on a sword. My neck also...it is my pleasure to wrap in a noose." In the *Remedia* Ovid aims to rescue despairing lovers, especially men, but he never interferes with the desperate lovers--all of them women--depicted in the *Heroides*: he speaks not at all as himself ("ego") in the letters, but impersonates the heroines themselves. I would argue that the

contrasting attitudes toward love and suicide that emerge from each work constitute the salient difference--a difference of *genre* as well as of *gender*: where the *Remedia* aims to *correct* the suicidal impulses of its male readers, the *Heroides* *capitalizes* on those of its female characters.

The *Remedia Amoris* is explicitly didactic. But in the *Remedia* itself, Ovid acknowledges that all poetry, including love poetry, is *potentially* didactic, insofar as it may influence the reader's mood and behavior. It is for this very reason that he warns his students in the *Remedia* not to read love poetry (*teneros ne tange poetas, Rem. Am. 757*) when they are trying to conclude a love affair. "Run away from Callimachus; he is not an enemy of love," he advises them, adding Philetas, Sappho, Anacreon, Tibullus, Propertius, Gallus, and finally himself (excepting the *Remedia*, of course), to the list of poets that lovelorn men are to avoid (*Rem. Am. 759-66*).²

The *Heroides* is not mentioned by name in this passage, nor anywhere in the *Remedia* for that matter. However, Ovid reminds us of *Heroides* 2 in this line: "Phyllis would have lived if she had employed me as her teacher" (*vixisset*

²By contrast at *Ars Amatoria* 3.329-46, Ovid advises women that, if they want to have success in love, they should read Callimachus, Philetas, Anacreon, Sappho, Menander, Propertius, Gallus, Tibullus, Varro, Virgil, and his own *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Heroides*. It should be noted that the inclusion of the *Heroides* on this list by itself reminds us that the *Heroides* is love poetry, and thus that the death-wishes are a mode of erotic discourse, not literal wishes for death. Ovid later recognizes the difficulties and dangers of using death rhetoric as erotic discourse; I will argue below that he addresses this problem in the *Remedia Amoris*.

Phyllis, si me foret usa magistro, Rem. Am. 55). Phyllis serves in this context as a negative example: she killed herself because she was unenlightened by Ovid; if she had only had the benefit of his instruction, then she would have lived.

Instruction is thematized throughout the *Heroides*. Some of the myths that are retold in the *Heroides* are about the "teaching" of murder and suicide. Canace, for example, is instructed by her father to kill herself; he sends her a sword for this purpose. Hypermestra, on the other hand, is given a sword and instructed by her father to kill her new husband Lynceus. Meanwhile, Ariadne gives fatal instructions, teaching her beloved Theseus how to kill the Minotaur. These scenes of instruction are part of the mythology that Ovid inherits, but it is worth noting that he chooses to collect in the *Heroides* examples where death is encouraged rather than avoided. What is original, however, is the way in which the heroines themselves adopt the rhetoric of instruction in order to communicate their own death-wishes.

Dido and Sappho each writes, for instance, that someone has instructed her to die. Briseis writes to Achilles instructing him to run his sword through her chest, and Hypermestra instructs her husband to kill her. Deianira in *Heroides 9* repeatedly asks herself, "Disloyal Deianira, why do you hesitate to die?" (*Impia quid dubitas Deianira mori?*). I would argue that this serves as a type of self-instruction:

having discovered her fatal error, Deianira prescribes death as self-punishment. She not only contemplates death while writing the letter, but if she reads it before sending it--as letter-writers often do--the letter encourages her to die. Words inscribed on a page have authority: when we are serious about a promise or a complaint, we "put it in writing." Even the author may be subject to the power or authority of his or her own writing. Deianira's letter is designed to persuade her husband Hercules that she is going to kill herself. Since erotic discourse has the effect of stirring up the emotions, as Ovid suggests in the *Remedia*, then reading and re-reading a love-letter would not soothe the letter-writer's feelings, but rather succeeds in stirring them up even more. We will look at several letters in addition to Deianira's which guide the author of the letter herself to die.

In the following section we will look at death-wishes in the *Heroides* that are formulated as types of instruction. Passages are grouped in three divisions: 1) those describing a scene in which the heroine writes that she *has been instructed* to die; 2) those in which the heroine *instructs her lover* to kill her; and 3) those in which the heroine *instructs herself* to die.

Of course, not every death-wish in the *Heroides* suggests a scene of instruction. Many are exclamatory wishes, such as this one which Hermione writes to Orestes (*Heroides* 8.121-22):

Aut ego praemoriar primoque exstinguar in aevo,
aut ego Tantalidae Tantalidis uxor ero!

I will either die first and be annihilated in my youth,
or as a descendent of Tantalus I will be the wife of a
Tantalid!

The exclamatory death-wishes in the *Heroides* deserve separate treatment.³ The focus of the present chapter is Ovid's use of the didactic model to represent the heroines' wishes for death, a model which both runs throughout the work and helps place the letters, as a collection, in the context of Ovid's corpus.

³Exclamatory death-wishes include *Her.* 7. 183 (Dido to Aeneas): *est animus nobis effundere vitam*; *Her.* 10.112 (Ariadne to Theseus): *At semel aeterna nocte premenda fui*; *Her.* 12.118 (Medea to Jason): *Sic ego, sed tecum, dilaceranda fui*! *Her.* 12.123-25 (Medea to Jason): *Compressos utinam Symplegadas elisissent/ nostraque adhaererent ossibus ossa tuis!* / *Aut nos Scylla rapax canibus misisset edendos!* *Her.* 13.28 (Laodamia to Protesilaus): *Indignor miserae non licuisse mori*; *Her.* 14.59-60 (Hypermetra to Lynceus): *Si manus haec aliquam posset committere caedem, / morte foret dominae sanguinolenta suae.*

Instructed to Die

We have seen that when Propertius wants to conclude his love affair with Cynthia, he goes on pilgrimage to Athens, expecting to find instruction in the words of the great men who once lived there. In desperation some people might turn to god for salvation; Propertius, however, turns to the men of ancient Athens as representatives of reason, common sense, and self-control, or what the Greeks call *sophrosune*.

Ovid's heroines are also in a crisis caused by *amor*. But where do they turn for assistance and instruction? The heroines compose letters to the men they love appealing for assistance. Their appeals sometimes seem paradoxical: a heroine applies to her lover for his help, but simultaneously claims not to need rescuing, since some other authority has already advised her to die.

It is not a paradox, though, if we find a *rhetorical* motive within the statement "I have been instructed to die." My contention in this chapter is that a heroine's death-wish must be analyzed as rhetoric, that is, as a strategy of persuasion. Implicit in the self-effacement of the heroine's death-wish is the message, "Come back and instruct me not to die." The wish is not written down solely in order to convey information, but in order to create an emotional effect and to elicit an active response from the one reader that counts--the abandoning lover. In the two letters that I will

discuss below (*Heroides* 7 and 15), each heroine depicts a scenario featuring herself and a counselling figure. These instructors, however, do not represent the voice of reason, as Plato does for Propertius, or Ovid does in the *Remedia* for *decepti iuvenes*. In general the heroines claim to be irrational, and call their lovers' attention constantly and deliberately to signs indicating the dominance of emotion (especially rage, grief, and erotic passion) over reason in their lives. Thus while Propertius solves his romantic crisis by improving his mind, the heroines pursue quite another strategy, writing letters that are meant to convince the reader (the lover) that they are nearly *out of* their minds.

The *Heroides* both offers and thematizes didacticism, as we shall see in some detail. This aspect of the text takes its most literal form in two elaborate and related scenes of instruction: in Dido's letter (*Her.*7), and Sappho's (*Her.*15). Both heroines claim to have received instruction in a sacred place: they "hear voices," and the voices they hear instruct them to die. Interpreted literally, the letters affirm that the heroines have actually been in communication with spirits, or at least believe they have been. I would suggest, however, that they are not in fact passive vessels receiving orders from outside. They may present themselves, in their letters, as submissive listeners, but other aspects of their letters--the very act of writing them--reveal that the heroines are themselves active authors who *initiate*

communication rather than waiting passively to be communicated *with*. The heroine is not only the author of the letter but also (and this is what she takes pains to conceal) her lover's instructor: she instructs her lover--sometimes directly, other times indirectly--to come back to her.

To occupy the role of author means more, though, than simply writing a letter. The heroines are also authors of certain *fictions* told in the letter, such as the scene of instruction, in which they depict themselves being told to die. Moreover, the letter as a whole creates the fictional character of the letter-writer. The author of any letter necessarily constructs a portrait of herself, and whether the author intends to deceive or not, the character that emerges from the text is partial, textual, and literary--in a word, fictional.⁴ Dido and Sappho are alike in that they present themselves as what we might call superstitious, or possessed, almost psychotic. I suggest that they *deliberately* portray themselves this way as part of a larger project to persuade the lover to return.

In her letter to Aeneas, *Heroides* 7, Dido employs several different strategies of persuasion: she promises Aeneas that he will rule her kingdom if he stays (7.149-52); she warns him that she might be pregnant with his child

⁴Here I agree with Linda S. Kauffman: "Since every letter to the beloved is also a self-address...the heroine's project--aided by her reading and her writing--also involves self-creation, self-invention," in *Discourses of Desire: Gender and Genre, and Epistolary Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986) 25.

(7.133-34); she indicates that weather conditions are unfavorable for his departure (7.41-44). Each of these utterances (promise, threat, statement) is clearly designed to make Aeneas stay with her in Carthage. In this context we ought to examine closely the purpose of every other utterance in Dido's letter. When she writes, for example, that she has heard her dead husband Sychaeus summoning her to join him, she knows that she will give Aeneas the impression that she is desperate and vulnerable. What could she gain by giving him this impression? Before we can offer an answer, we need to look back at Ovid's source for Dido and her plight.

In the *Aeneid* Virgil tells us that Dido hears Sychaeus summoning her to the underworld. "There was in her palace a shrine made of marble dedicated to her former husband....From it voices seemed to be heard and the words of her husband calling her...."⁵ In the *Aeneid*, though, Dido's vision is related by Virgil to the general reader, whereas in the *Heroides* Dido herself writes to Aeneas: "I have a marble shrine in which Sychaeus is worshipped" (*Est mihi marmorea sacratus in aede Sychaeus*, 7.101). This shrine is for Dido what Athens is for Propertius: while Propertius goes to Athens to hear the improving voices of the past, Dido devotes herself to the shrine. There she hears, or so she says, the

⁵*Aeneid* 4.457-61:

praeterea fuit in tectis de marmore templum
 coniugis antiqui, miro quod honore colebat,
 velleribus niveis et festa fronde revinctum:
 hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis
 visa viri...

voice of her dead husband instructing her to join him (7.103-05):

Hinc ego me sensi noto quater ore citari;
 ipse sono tenui dixit, "Elissa, veni!"
 Nulla mora est: venio, venio tibi debita coniunx.

From this place I have heard myself being summoned four times in a familiar voice; he himself whispered, "Elissa, come!" There is no waiting: I am coming, I am coming, the wife owed to you.

At first Ovid's Dido speaks to Aeneas directly, and refers to her dead husband Sychaeus in the third person. Then, as if Sychaeus were present to her *right now*, she speaks to *him* instead of Aeneas. "I am coming!" she tells him, turning away, in one sense, from Aeneas, though without turning away from the letter she is writing to him. In so doing, she seems to be trying to make Aeneas jealous, letting him "see" her (as if in a brief theatrical production) in the act of abandoning *him* for another man while simultaneously flaunting her fidelity and devotion to her first husband.⁶

In the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, on the other hand, Dido's ongoing devotion to Sychaeus is a private matter; jealousy is not one of the strategies that Virgil's Dido uses to try to keep Aeneas in Carthage. Virgil tells the reader about Dido's devotion to the memory of her husband, and thus this bit of information may influence *our* view of Dido, but not Aeneas'. Ovid, in relating the same scene in the *Heroides*, accomplishes something else altogether. The marble shrine is no longer a secret sign of Dido's fidelity to her

⁶As Dido literally does in *Aeneid* 6, walking away from Aeneas in silence with her husband Sychaeus.

husband, because she thrusts it to the fore of her argument. Ovid's Dido exploits her own feelings of despair and devotion for argument's sake. The reader of the *Aeneid* trusts the narrator's presumably impartial description of Dido's subjective experience--which is not to say that the reader believes in the objective reality of the voice of Sychaeus, but only that we have no reason *not* to believe that *to Virgil's Dido* the voice is real. Genuine pity is stirred for Virgil's Dido in the *Aeneid*, for while the narrator intimates that she is going mad, *Dido herself tells no one*, least of all Aeneas. Ovid's Dido, on the other hand, "confides" in Aeneas that she is losing her mind; or rather, she lets him "overhear" her mad dialogue with the dead, as if forgetful of her letter-writing. "*Venio, venio,*" Dido writes, as if addressing Sychaeus, not Aeneas.⁷

Dido is also adopting a rhetorical strategy that she suspects Aeneas himself of using. In the *Aeneid* Aeneas argues that he has had divine visions in which the *gods* themselves *ordered* him--against his will--to leave Carthage (*Aen.* 4.345-46 and 356-59). It is originally Aeneas, in other words, who hears the voice of instruction. But Dido seems to think that he *invents* this as an excuse for

⁷"Dido [in *Heroides* 7] pulls us into a dramatic situation entirely by her own words, and, by her obvious desire to dramatize herself, invites us to pity her artistically contrived character, but at the same time to admire the artistry which she (and Ovid) used to contrive it," W.S. Anderson, "The *Heroides*," in *Ovid*, ed. J.W. Binns (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 49-83; esp. 54-55.

abandoning her; in the *Aeneid* she immediately throws his words back in his face (*Aen.* 4.376-78):

nunc augur Apollo,
nunc Lyciae sortes, nunc et Iove missus ab ipso
interpres divum fert horrida iussa per auras.

Now the prophet Apollo, now the Lycian oracles, now even the messenger of the gods, sent by Jupiter himself, carries through the air his formidable commands.

Virgil's Dido has no sympathy for Aeneas here at all. The way she repeats his words suggests that she does not in fact even believe him, but rather thinks that he is making up an excuse for abandoning her. Likewise in the *Heroides* Ovid's Dido taunts Aeneas with his own words (*Her.* 7.141-42):

"Sed iubet ire deus!" Vellem, vetuisset adire,
Punica nec Teucris pressa fuisset humus.

"But the god orders me to go." I should have wished he had forbidden you to come, and that Punic soil had never been trodden on by Trojans!

The fact that Dido suspects Aeneas of lying to her suggests that, in telling him a similar story, she is lying to him. We may not be able to prove or disprove a person's claim to divine or psychic vision, but we can disbelieve it. Ovid's Dido not only disbelieves Aeneas, but she adopts his tactic.

There are two approaches to interpreting this passage and the *Heroides* as a whole. Which approach we choose depends on whether or not we attribute to the character Dido (and to any of the heroines) the sense of language that, say, a politician, lawyer, poet, or student of rhetoric might have. Does Dido have any apprehension--learned or intuitive--

-of the uses of rhetoric?⁸ If not, then it must follow that her letter is devoid of art. According to this view, then, the letter is not a pointed piece of writing but an artless transcription of Dido's thoughts, feelings, and experiences as they occur.

This view (not one to which I subscribe) neglects several significant aspects of epistolarity. A letter is addressed to a specific person, and therefore the language of a letter is intentional, pointed, edited. In short, it is rhetorically formulated. I claim that Ovid does not aim to portray the artlessness of heroines as a phenomenon in itself. Rather, the heroines themselves *aim* to dissimulate, to achieve an artless effect. It is this *rhetorical* phenomenon--the heroines' art of *representing* themselves as artless--that interests Ovid, and not only in the context of manipulating their lovers' actions. "Where love is concerned," as Linda Kauffman observes, "Ovid recognizes how large a role artifice plays in arousing and sustaining desire."⁹

Sappho's letter is another case in point. Sappho is a famous poet, and yet in her letter to Phaon (*Heroides* 15),

⁸Unfortunately the ancient treatises on rhetoric, the study of rhetoric in ancient schools, and subsequent modern studies in ancient rhetoric have combined to give the impression that rhetoric is more artificial than language itself. Ovid, I believe, has a less elitist view of rhetoric: throughout his corpus he underscores that humans use "rhetoric" insofar as we use language itself; he does not conceive of language untainted with human intention (or what is these days called "spin").

⁹Kauffman (1986) 52.

she claims that she is no longer able to compose poetry.¹⁰ The Muses have deserted her, and instead she is visited by a Naiad who instructs her to leap from the rock of Leucas, a well-known Lover's Leap. Again I argue that the heroine is not divulging secrets unwittingly, but relating a fictional scenario in order to compel her lover to return at once to save her. Following a pattern that is familiar from Dido's letter, Sappho goes to a sacred place as if looking for divine guidance (*Heroides* 15.157-176):

Est nitidus vitreoque magis perlucidus amne
 fons sacer; hunc multi numen habere putant.
 Quem supra ramos expandit aquatica lotos,
 una nemus, tenero caespite terra viret.
 Hic ego cum lassos posuissem flebilis artus,
 constitit ante oculos Naias una meos;
 constitit et dixit: "Quoniam non ignibus aequis
 ureris, Ambracia est terra petenda tibi.
 Phoebus ab excelso, quantum patet, adspicit aequor:
 Actiacum populi Leucadiumque vocant.
 Hinc se Deucalion Pyrrhae succensus amore
 misit et illaeso corpore pressit aquas.
 Nec mora, versus amor fugit lentissima mersi
 pectora; Deucalion igne levatus erat.
 Hanc legem locus ille tenet. Pete protinus altam
 Leucada nec saxo desiluisse time!"
 Ut monuit, cum voce abiit. Ego frigida surgo
 nec lacrimas oculi continuere mei.
 Ibimus, o nymphe, monstrataque saxa petemus;
 sit procul insano victus amore timor.

There is a sacred spring, shining and clearer than a translucent spring; many people think that a divine spirit inhabits it. Over it a water lotus spreads its branches, a grove by itself, and the ground is green with soft grass. When I, in tears, had placed my weary limbs here, there stood before my eyes a Naiad. She stood and said, "Since you are being burned by the flames of unrequited love, you must look for the land of Ambracia. Phoebus from on high looks down at the sea, as far as it extends; the people call him Apollo of Actium and of Leucadia. From here Deucalion, burned by

¹⁰*Her.*15.13-14: *nec mihi, dispositis quae iungam carmina nervis, /
 proveniunt; vacuae carmina mentis opus.*

love for Pyrrha, threw himself and pressed the waves with his body unharmed. Without delay love turned and fled the stubborn heart in his soaked body, and Deucalion was relieved of passion's flame. This is the law of that place. At once look for the height of Leucas and do not fear to have leapt from the rock!"

So she advised, and vanished along with her voice. Frightened, I rise, nor did my eyes hold back the tears. I will go, o nymph, and I will look for the indicated rocks! Let fear be conquered by mad love and be gone!

Sappho claims to have lost her ability to write, but she writes this scene, in which she creates a character--a stand-in for herself--who is a believer in nymphs, magic cures, and myths. But we become unwitting victims of her rhetoric if we confuse this character with the author herself, for this scene of instruction is a fiction invented for Phaon's consumption. The story of Deucalion's jump is a blatant signal of this fictionality: in no other source is Deucalion said to have leapt from the famous lover's leap at Leucas. As Palmer notes in his *Heroides* commentary, all other versions of the myth hold that "Deucalion and Pyrrha lived in Thessaly and their love ran perfectly smooth."¹¹

Florence Verducci argues, in *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart*, that Sappho's version of the Deucalion myth is "intentionally deceptive." However, she does not see Sappho herself as the *author* of the lying tale but as the *victim* of the gods' deception. According to Verducci, the gods Apollo and Aphrodite became angry at Sappho, and formed a conspiracy to kill her; the Naiad serves as their messenger. Sappho's

¹¹Arthur Palmer, ed. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Heroides* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1898) ad *Heroides* 15.167. On traditions associated with the rock at Leucas, see Gregory Nagy, "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rocks of Leukas," *HSCP* 77 (1973) 137-77.

"credulity," Verducci claims, "is...too naïve," and she believes the nymph.¹²

Verducci's reading runs opposite to my own. She claims that Sappho's letter reflects, in short, the ramblings of a gullible and unselfconscious character. But I see it as the work of the character Sappho, someone for whom writing is, after all, an occupation. It is true that neither Verducci's interpretation nor my own allows us to avoid gender-typing Ovid's Sappho: we must conclude that she is either an artless and literal-minded woman, or a crafty and manipulative one. But since Ovid himself considers it far better for men at least to be artful than artless, my reading is informed as much by his principles as by feminist ones. I suggest that Sappho is the witting *author* of her own fantasy of instruction and of the specially invented myth of Deucalion contained therein. The threat of self-destruction is, I claim, designed to persuade Phaon that, just as she no longer is the author of poems, she is likewise no longer the author of her own actions; someone else--the Naiad--advises her what to do. If her letter is successful, then Phaon will come back not simply to stop Sappho from killing herself, but to protect her from her own susceptibility.

¹²Florence Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985) 174-79, esp. 177.

Instructions to Kill

In the first category of death-wishes, Dido and Sappho communicate the wish for death in their letters by claiming that they have received instructions to die. In the composition of these scenes, the letter-writer invests another voice (the ghost of Sychaeus or Sappho's Naiad) with authority, while she herself mimics a helpless woman in need of her lover's guidance and protection.

The second group of death-wishes also revolves around scenes of instruction, but these heroines *give* overt instruction rather than receiving it. The nature and tone of the instruction change as well: instead of sounding lost and confused, the heroines in these passages issue brazen, even contemptuous commands--though as we shall see, this display of courage is not long lived. The bold and challenging tone of the passages we are about to examine invites comparison with the sacrifice of Polyxena in the *Hecuba* discussed earlier. Opening her robes before the assembled Greek soldiers, Polyxena charges the executioner to "Look at this: if you want to strike my chest, young man, strike; if you want my neck, my neck is ready." The Greek army responds to her death with praise for both the boldness of her spirit and the beauty of her body: their response clearly indicates that they find her not just morally admirable, but sexually attractive as well.

But "the sacrifice of Polyxena" is an ambiguous phrase. While it is true that, on the one hand, the Greeks make a sacrifice of Polyxena for the sake of their hero Achilles, it should also be noted that Polyxena herself makes a sacrifice: what she sacrifices is the integrity of her *speech* (she is represented as wishing to live, but as *saying* she wants to die), which she trades for glory and admiration.

Several of Ovid's heroines likewise sacrifice *literary* integrity--that is, the *unity and coherence* of their *letters*--to their desire for reunion with their lovers. They do so by daring their lovers to kill them, when in fact (as they inevitably admit) they do not wish to die. Briseis, for example, orders Achilles to attack her with his sword (*stricto pete corpora ferro*, 3.145), but then recants at once, begging him to save her life (*A! potius serves nostram...vitam!* 3.149). Whether charging their lovers to kill them or begging their lovers to save them, Ovid's heroines are always trying to persuade them to return. It is as if they learned from Polyxena that an ostentatious expression of their desire for death will startle the viewers (in Polyxena's case, the Greek soldiers) or readers (the heroines' lovers) into action.

By charging her lover to kill her, then, the heroine aims to elicit feelings of admiration and longing, a response that is also linked in literary tradition with the "beautiful" death of a male warrior. At the same time, however, she admits that she is not brave and eager to be

killed, but in fact lonely and afraid of death. These two apparently contradictory utterances are in fact *complementary* strategies of persuasion. I argue that the heroines use *disunity* itself as a structuring principle and a rhetorical strategy. The heroine's goal in this respect is to give her lover the impression that she is not a coherent, unified subject, but a fragmented one. She will achieve *unity* only by being *reunited* with him.

It is important, therefore, to look at the death-wish in context; the contextual setting often changes the meaning of the death-wish from literal to figurative. In this section I examine four of the *Heroides* (3, 7, 10, and 14), in which the heroine's self-contradiction creates disunity in the letter. We will look at the inconsistency between each heroine's instruction to her lover to kill her and her subsequent plea that he save her.

The wish for death is a major motif in *Heroides* 3, Briseis' letter to Achilles. Several times in the body of the letter Briseis wishes to die, yet she finally begs Achilles, in the letter's closing lines, to save her life. The first death-wish belongs in the category that I have designated the exclamatory type: Briseis announces that she would sooner be killed by natural disaster than watch Achilles sail away and abandon her (*Her.*3.63-66):

Devorer ante, precor, subito telluris hiatu
aut rutilo missi fulminis igne cremer,
quam sine me Pthiis canescant aequora remis,

et videam puppes ire relictas tuas!

I pray that I may be swallowed by a sudden opening of the earth, or burned up by a glowing flame of lightning sent from heaven, before the seas can whiten with Phthian oars without me, before I can be abandoned and watch your ships depart.

Yet later in the letter she wishes not to be killed by natural disaster, but to die at Achilles' *command*.

Abandonment feels like death to her, and she therefore reasons that Achilles may as well order her to die (3.139-44):

aut si versus amor tuus est in taedia nostri,
 quam sine te cogis vivere, coge mori!
 utque facis, coges. abiit corpusque colorque;
 sustinet hoc animae spes tamen una tui.
 qua si destituor, repetam fratresque virumque--
 nec tibi magnificum femina iussa mori.

But if your love for me has turned into boredom, she whom you compel to live without you, compel to die! You will be saying in words what it is you already do in deed. My body has wasted, my color has vanished; this bit of life is supported by only a single hope anyway--my hope in you. If I am deprived of that, I will look for my [dead] brothers and husband--and a woman ordered to die is nothing for you to boast about.

Here Briseis gives herself all the attributes of a weak female. She submits to orders, even when ordered to die, and her thinness and pallor suggest a feminine rather than a masculine death. She cannot maintain herself, but relies on male protectors. If Achilles refuses to support her, then she must revert to the custody of her brothers and former husband, even though they are dead. Finally she speaks directly to the point: she is a woman (*femina*), and it would be wrong for Achilles to cause a woman's death.

In these lines Briseis uses gender typing in order to appeal as the quintessential helpless female to Achilles, the male hero. She would sympathize, if she could only read them; with the passages in Sappho's and Dido's letters describing the orders they are under to die. While Briseis' letter recalls those scenes of instruction (discussed in the previous section), it also moves on to a different type: first she tells Achilles to order her to die, but then she corrects herself, ordering *him* to kill her himself (3.145-48):

cur autem iubeas? stricto pete corpora ferro;
 est mihi qui fosso pectore sanguis eat.
 me petat ille tuus, qui si dea passa fuisset,
 ensis in Atridae pectus iturus erat!

Why though should you issue an order? Attack my body with sword drawn; I have blood that can flow from a pierced breast. Let that sword attack me which, if the goddess had allowed it, would have entered into the breast of Agamemnon!

As she invites Achilles to attack her, she figuratively bares her breast, as Polyxena does literally in the *Hecuba*. This dramatic gesture might have been an effective conclusion to the letter. But Briseis keeps writing and once again changes her expression (and presumably Achilles' too, as he reads). Reverting to the role of a weak and submissive woman, Briseis makes an impassioned plea to Achilles (3.149):

A! potius serves nostram, tua munera, vitam!

Ah! Instead may you save my life, your gift!

We can imagine at this point the criticism that Aristotle (or an Aristotelian) might make of Briseis' letter.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle openly criticizes Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* because the heroine first begs her father not to sacrifice her, then suddenly proclaims that it is her wish to be sacrificed. Aristotle regards this blatant inconsistency as a failing on the part of the dramatist to achieve artistic unity.¹³ *Heroides* 3, according to Aristotle's standards at least, bears the same defect: namely, disunity of character caused again by the heroine's failure to maintain a single position with regard to life and death. One moment Briseis says she wants Achilles to kill her; in the next she wants him to save her.¹⁴

But inconsistency does not have to be viewed as a problem. It seems to me that Briseis is not striving for unity in her letter, but *disunity*. Achilles would not be attracted to her for her ability to express herself with utter clarity and coherence, and Achilles' response (pace Aristotle) is Briseis' only and absolute standard of judgment. Unity may sometimes be a valid ideal, but not in a poem or letter about love.¹⁵

¹³*Poetics* 1454a28-33; see discussion above.

¹⁴Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's "Heroides"* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974) 24, analyzes certain other expressions in this letter which indicate Briseis' "inner confusion and conflict." Jacobson later observes that "many of the *Heroides* are disjointed and repetitive," and singles out *Heroides* 2 (Phyllis' letter) as the most so (p.74).

¹⁵Kauffman (1986) 52, invoking Plato's aesthetics rather than Aristotle's, reaches the same conclusion in her chapter on the *Heroides*: "Western literature's premises derive from Platonic models of the self as coherent and unified, but the Ovidian self is capricious and changeable, and Ovid constantly subverts the Platonic values of consistency, clarity, and unity."

In this connection we should recall the praise that Longinus bestows on Sappho 31, a poem describing the diverse physical sensations of love ("When I look at you it is no longer possible for me to speak, but my tongue is broken, and a subtle flame suddenly races under my skin, I cannot see, my ears ring, a cold sweat grips me, a trembling possesses me all over, I am greener than grass, I seem little short of dying..."). The particular feature that Longinus singles out for comment is the binding of opposites in the poem: "Do you not admire," he writes,

the way in which she brings everything together--mind and body, hearing and tongue, eyes and skin? She seems to have lost them all, and to be looking for them as though they were external to her. She is cold and hot, mad and sane, frightened and near death, all by turns. The result is that we see in her not a single emotion, but a complex of emotions. Lovers experience all this; Sappho's excellence, as I have said, lies in her adoption and combination of the most striking details.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that Longinus regards fear and death (parallel with two other pairs of opposites: cold and hot; madness and sanity) as contrary sensations, for these are the same two states between which Briseis fluctuates, as we have just seen. Since death is the state in which all sensation is gone, it is in a way the opposite of fear, which makes us most sensitive to the fact of our mortality.

Furthermore, Longinus associates these opposites precisely with the experience of eros. Ovid's heroines appear to be influenced by Sappho's representation of love.

¹⁶Longinus, *On Sublimity*, 10.3. Translated by D.A. Russell in D.A. Russell and M. Winterbottom, *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972).

Dido's letter to Aeneas (*Her.* 7), like Briseis' to Achilles, also contains contrasting, apparently contradictory, versions of the wish for death. We have looked already at the passage in which Dido claims to have been summoned to join her dead husband Sychaeus. This is not, however, the only death-wish in the letter. Like Briseis, Dido also instructs her lover to be her killer. Her challenge, again like Briseis', is juxtaposed with the admission that she is weak (because she is female) and wants her lover to save her.

Dido, the founding queen of Carthage, is less suited for the role of a helpless female than is Briseis, captured in war, and so a slave. But still Dido presents herself (*offers herself*) to Aeneas as a defenseless and oppressed woman. To do so she capitalizes on her own lack of military experience and on the physical vulnerability of women in general (7.121-26):

Urbem constitui lateque patentia fixi
 moenia finitimis invidiosa locis.
 Bella tument. Bellis peregrina et femina temptor
 vixque rudes portas urbis et arma paro.
 Mille procis placui, qui me coiere querentes
 nescio quem thalamis praeposuisse suis.

I established a city and built walls extending far and wide that stir jealousy in the neighboring lands. Wars swell. A foreigner and a woman, I am assailed with wars, and with difficulty prepare arms and the crude gates of the city. I have been attractive to a thousand suitors who have gathered to complain that I preferred a nobody to their own marriage offers.

Carthage functions as a figure for Dido herself: both she and the city may give the appearance of strength and greatness, yet both are vulnerable to assault. Dido exploits an inherent ambiguity in the word *temptor* to say two things: "I--that is, my city--am attacked," and "I personally am sexually assaulted." Being a foreigner (*peregrina*) makes her vulnerable to military attack, while being "also a woman" (*et femina*) makes her vulnerable to sexual assault.

This acknowledgment of personal vulnerability and military inexperience carries with it an implicit request to Aeneas for help. He is an experienced fighter and leader, and Dido implies that he is obligated to defend her from the suitors since he is her "husband" and the cause of their resentment. But rather than ask Aeneas to protect her from the hostile aggressors, Dido directs him in the very next lines to betray her to them and let them kill her (7.127-30):

Quid dubitas vinctam Gaetulo tradere Iarbae?
 Praebuerim sceleri bracchia nostra tuo.
 Est etiam frater, cuius manus impia poscit
 respergi nostro sparsa cruore viri.

Why do you hesitate to hand over the woman you have conquered to the Gaetulian Iarbas? I would offer my arms to your crime. There is also my brother, whose disloyal hand demands to be sprinkled again with my blood, having been sprinkled already with the blood of my husband.

Following *directly* after her admission of weakness, this challenge--almost an offer to surrender--is a startling contrast.¹⁷ Only a moment ago Dido sounded fearful and

¹⁷By contrast, in *Aeneid* 4 Virgil's Dido does not invite Aeneas to participate in her downfall; Virgil's Dido is also less gruesome than Ovid's Dido: "What am I waiting for?" she says to Aeneas. "For my

vulnerable. Now, though, she is not afraid of death, but ready to lay down her life provided it is her lover who takes her "captive" (*capta*). This, of course, is the act made famous by Polyxena: the act of yielding to the enemy's demand that she be killed. Dido depicts herself in a similar situation--her blood too is in demand (*poscit*)--and she follows Polyxena's example of fearless self-surrender.

But Dido does not maintain this position for long. She flirts only briefly with the idea of death before making a heartfelt appeal to Aeneas for mercy (7.165-70):

parce, precor, domui, quae se tibi tradit habendam!
 quod crimen dicis praeter amasse meum?
 non ego sum Pthias magnisque oriunda Mycenis,
 nec steterunt in te virque paterque meus.
 si pudet uxoris, non nupta, sed hospita dicar;
 dum tua sit Dido, quidlibet esse feret.

I beg you, spare the house which surrenders itself to be possessed by you! What crime can you say is mine except to have loved? I am not Phthian nor did I come from great Mycenae; neither did my husband and father stand against you. If you are ashamed of "wife," let me be called not your "married wife" but your "hostess"; as long as she is "your Dido," she will endure to be anything at all.

This too is a form of self-surrender, but it is in sharp contrast with Polyxena's famous self-sacrifice, and with what Dido herself has written above in this very letter. Whereas she previously submitted to being his prisoner (*capta*), she now offers Aeneas her house (*domus*), referring to marriage. Aeneas is the master in both scenarios: the master of her as his slave or the paterfamilias of her house; but in the

brother Pygmalion to raze my city walls, or the Gaetolian Iarbas to take me prisoner?" (quid moror? an mea Pygmalion dum moenia frater/ destruat aut captam ducat Gaetulus Iarbas?' Aen. 4.325-25).

latter case, instead of instructing him to kill her as he would a prisoner, Dido begs him to possess her house, and by extension herself as his wife.

Both Dido and Briseis vacillate on this point: they instruct their lovers to abuse and kill them, and then they beg their lovers for mercy and protection. My reading of these contradictory wishes is based on the understanding, set forth in the previous section, that the heroines use language rhetorically--that their utterances are inseparable from their desires and intentions--and that the wish for death is part of a larger strategy of persuasion. We can begin to appreciate at this point the complexity of the death-wish as a rhetorical element in the *Heroides*. The heroines do not merely use the threat of suicide as a means of coercing their lovers to comply with their wishes, as the chorus of Danaids do in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, threatening to hang themselves in the temple.¹⁸ Rather, they use death-wishes of various types as a means of delineating their own character, underscoring especially their femininity. The resulting portrait--of a frail and unbalanced woman--is a familiar female type that (as the heroine hopes) will cause her lover to rise to her defense, since men are typically the protectors of vulnerable women. In other words, the heroine manipulates her lover's emotions not so much by the threat that she might kill herself, as by the suggestion that she is unstable and needs a man's--her lover's--guidance and

¹⁸Aesch. *Supp.* 457-65.

protection. The success of her rhetoric depends on whether the lover recognizes in her self-portrait a familiar female character type, and whether it subsequently produces in him a *typical* male response. Will the lover play the role that "naturally" complements the frail and naïve heroine? Her wish to die serves as an actor's prompt: "Enter hero: strong, confident, soothing." She thus uses language expressive of a suicidal intention to manipulate the male response.

Throughout the *Heroides* the heroines describe themselves using images of things shaking, quivering, and falling, images which register at the visual level the overall rhetorical strategy governing the letters. Canace, for example, compares her quivering body to the surface of rippling water and the branch of a tree moved by the wind (11.77-79):

ut mare fit tremulum, tenui cum stringitur aura,
 ut quatitur tepido fraxinus icta Noto,
 sic mea vibrari pallentia membra videres...

As the sea is made to ripple when scraped by a slight breeze, as an ash tree is struck by a warm wind from the south, so you could have seen my wan limbs made to quiver...

The same effect is achieved whether a heroine says directly that her body is frail and quivering, or gestures obliquely to the frailness and quivering of her whole being, as it were.¹⁹ In *Heroides* 3 and 7 Briseis and Dido indicate that

¹⁹See also *Her.* 2.129-130 (Phyllis describes herself fainting in the surf); 3.141 (Briseis points out, "My body is vanished, and so is my color"); 4.47-52 (Phaedra confides to Hippolytus that she has fits of

they are not stable and autonomous *subjects*: they do this by fluctuating wildly between an extreme desire for death and an equally extreme one for life. Through their dramatic style of writing they thus portray a consciousness that is as disheveled, wan, and shaky as their physical being.

The *Heroides* has often been compared to the dramatic monologue. The analogy is useful because we accept that an actor on stage *presents* himself or herself to the audience in character. Letters, on the other hand, create the illusion of sincerity and spontaneity. Although we are all familiar with the letter as a literary genre as well as a form of (non-fictional) communication, we still tend to experience even the most obviously fictional letter as the truth. It is difficult, therefore, to admit that Ovid's heroines are involved in the act of self-presentation even when their rhetorical strategies become clear to us. Unity exists in the individual letter only insofar as the writing subject--the heroine--presents herself *consistently* as a *fractured, divided, and incomplete* self. What she lacks is reason and certainty--the very principles which the male, her lover, represents.

As a third example, let us consider Ariadne's letter to Theseus, *Heroides* 10. This letter contains many passages of physical description, in much of which Ariadne presents herself to Theseus as broken, lost, and manic. She draws

madness that she does not remember, but which her companions tell her of when the madness subsides); and so forth.

herself as an eternal exile (10.65-66), and as a mad Bacchante wandering with her hair undone (*diffusis erravi sola capillis, / qualis ab Ogygio concita Baccha deo*, 10.47-48). Earlier she describes herself with hair "torn" (*rapta coma est*, 10.16) running back and forth "without order" (*nunc huc, nunc illuc et utroque sine ordine curro*, 10.19). Finally she invites Theseus to witness (through her written description) her trembling body, her dress soaked with tears, and again her hair undone (10.137-40):

adspice demissos lugentis more capillos
 et tunicas lacrimis sicut ab imbre graves!
 corpus ut impulsae segetes aquilonibus horret,
 litteraque articulo pressa tremente labat.

Look at my hair undone as if I were in mourning, and my dress heavy with tears as if from the rain. My body shivers like the crops beaten by the north winds, and each letter collapses under the pressure of a trembling hand.

Ariadne not only describes her physical appearance, but interprets it for Theseus: "My hair is undone--that means I am in mourning"; she also interprets her handwriting for him, although that is something he can see for himself.

The counterparts to such physical description are the uninterpreted and indirect signs sprinkled throughout the letter of her vacillating desire for death. For while Ariadne delineates the state of her physical self through direct description of loosened hair, shaking body, and so forth, she describes the equally precarious state of her *actual* being by making impassioned statements about wanting

to die. At first she tells Theseus that he ought to have killed her (10.77):

me quoque qua fratrem mactasses, improbe, clava!

You ought to have slain me with the same club as you did my brother [the Minotaur], you wicked man!

Ariadne's instruction takes the form not of a challenge or order, as in the passages from *Heroides* 3 and 7, but of correction or evaluation: "You failed to carry out your heroic duties properly." But this wish--to have Theseus kill her as if he were completing another heroic deed--reverses itself in the lines that immediately follow. Like Briseis and Dido, Ariadne juxtaposes the wish to be killed with the admission that she is afraid of dying (10.79-88):

Nunc ego non tantum, quae sum passura, recordor,
 sed quaecumque potest ulla relictâ pati.
 Occurrunt animo pereundi mille figurae,
 morsque minus poenae quam mora mortis habet.
 Iam iam venturos aut hac aut suspicor illac,
 qui lanient avido viscera dente lupos.
 Forsitan et fulvos tellus alat ista leones?
 Quis scit an haec saevas tigridas insulae habet.
 Et freta dicuntur magnas expellere phocas;
 quis vetat et gladios per latus ire meum?

Now I consider not only what I am going to suffer, but anything else that an abandoned woman could suffer. There come to mind one thousand ways of dying, and death itself is less punishing than waiting for death. Now already I sense that wolves are going to come either from this direction or that, who will shred my guts with their hungry teeth. Perhaps that land over there even breeds tawny lions? Who knows whether this island has fierce tigers. And the seas are said to cast forth giant seals. Who would stop swords too from running through my side?

If Theseus had not abandoned her, obviously he would be the one to defend her from the swords that she fears, as well as from the charging seals, tigers, lions, and wolves that she

worries are about to kill her. Here I think Ariadne implicitly reminds Theseus of his duty as a man to protect women from violent attacks. Like Dido, Ariadne plays the part of a sad and pathetic female, defenseless and unprotected from wild predators--even though it was originally *Ariadne* who protected *Theseus* from the beastly Minotaur. She shudders now to think of the horrible ways in which she might be killed, and wishes Theseus were there to save her, as she saved him in the Minotaur's labyrinth. Yet only a moment (or line) earlier she seems to be playing a different dramatic role, earnestly wishing that Theseus had clubbed her to death.

Ariadne's sudden shift from a defiantly fatal stance ("You should have killed me") to a pathetically needy one ("I'm a poor helpless woman after all--who will save me?) is, as I have argued, part of a rhetorical strategy, one that she shares with Briseis and Dido. But in all three of these letters (*Her.* 3, 7, and 10) this shift occurs dramatically; that is, each heroine presents herself reversing her position as if without intending to, or even without being aware that she is doing it. This dramatic separation of the two stances conceals their rhetorical and contextual connection. My contention that the two opposing self-representations in fact constitute an intentional strategy is confirmed by *Hypermestra's* letter, in which the two are clearly combined into a single gesture. *Hypermestra's* wish to die comes at

the end of her letter to Lynceus (*Heroides* 14) and is remarkable for the directness of its language (14.123-27):

At tu, si qua pia, Lynceu, tibi cura sororis
 quaeque tibi tribui munera, dignus habes,
 vel fer opem vel dede neci; defunctaque vita
 corpora furtivis insuper adde rogis
 et sepeli lacrimis perfusa fidelibus ossa...

But if you care at all for your faithful sister and if you deserve to possess the gifts which I have given you, either bring me aid or have me executed; and add my body done with life secretly to the pyre and bury my bones drenched with loyal tears...

No other heroine is so terse in her expression: *vel fer opem vel dede neci*: "Take care of me, or have me executed (and take care of my corpse)...." Something in the expression itself invites comparison with Dido's instruction to Aeneas in *Heroides* 7: both heroines direct their lovers to choose between *saving* them, and (not actually killing them but) handing them over to the enemy *to be killed*. Dido's enemies, the men who "demand" her death, are her brother Pygmalion and the Gaetulian chief Iarbas; Hypermestra's enemy is her angry father Danaus. By underlining the enemy's role, the two heroines crown their lovers as their ultimate hero and savior.

But in spite of its resemblance to what Dido says, Hypermestra's expression is in other aspects unique. It stands out for two reasons, the first being its relative lack of dramatic gesture. For though the words carry the same mixed message--instructing the lover both to kill the heroine and to save her--Hypermestra's delivery is not *dramatic*. That is, the words *vel fer opem vel dede neci* are more an

exhortation than a *character revealing statement*.

Hypermetra's letter thus ends with a short and pithy formulation of the message that the other three heroines communicate *dramatically* and *discursively*. Briseis, Dido, and Ariadne sometimes use the letter as if it were a stage on which each of them plays the part of an unbalanced woman who sometimes wants to be killed by her lover and other times wants him to save her. Meanwhile Hypermetra, though she does at times in her letter engage in histrionics, delivers her instructions to Lynceus in the style not of an actor on the stage, but of an orator at the podium. The phrase *vel fer opem vel dede neci*--marked by terseness, parallelism, and antithesis--is styled for rhetorical, not dramatic, effect.²⁰

The second point that sets off Hypermetra's expression from these others is that she does not just direct Lynceus to save her or kill her, but instructs him also to burn her corpse and bury the remains. This is actually a common conceit in the *Heroides*: several letters contain similar scenes of instruction regarding the disposal of the heroine's body after her death, and a death-wish of sorts is implicit in these passages, which are some of the most gruesome and pathetic in the collection. Canace, for instance, directs her lover (her brother) Macareus to gather the remains of their murdered baby (killed by their father on

²⁰The phrase invites comparison with Nathan Hale's admired utterance: "Give me liberty or give me death." See Jacobson (1974) 135, for an analysis of Hypermetra's language throughout the letter ("One cannot but be struck by the simplicity of the language and its easy fluidity....").

the day of its birth) and lay them to rest with hers in a single urn (11.123-26):

Tu tamen, o frustra miserae sperate sorori,
 sparsa, precor, nati collige membra tui
 et refer ad matrem socioque impone sepulchro
 urnaque nos habeat quamlibet arta duos!

But you, o longed for in vain by your poor sister--I pray that you gather the scattered limbs of your child and bring them back to his mother and place them in a shared grave, and let one urn, however tiny, hold the two of us!

Likewise Ariadne urges Theseus to come back to her, and if he finds her dead already, to care for her remains (10.149-50):

Flecte ratem, Theseu, versoque relabere verito;
 si prius occidero, tu tamen ossa feres.

Turn your ship, Theseus, and glide back with the wind behind you; if I shall have died already, you will at least carry away my bones.²¹

²¹A variation on this motif is telling the lover what will be written on the heroine's tomb. Dido reads her own epitaph to Aeneas (7.195-98):

Nec consumpta rogis inscribar Elissa Sychaei,
 hoc tamen in tumuli marmore carmen erit:
 Praebuit Aeneas et causam mortis et ensem.
 Ipsa sua Dido concidit usa manu.

Consumed by the pyre I will not be recorded as "Elissa, wife of Sychaeus," rather this will be the verse on my marble tomb: "Aeneas provided the motive for death and the sword. Dido herself fell dead using her own hand."

And Phyllis does the same (2.145-48):

Inscribere meo causa invidiosa sepulchro;
 aut hoc aut simili carmine notus eris:
 "Phyllida Demophoon leto dedit, hospes amantem;
 ille necis causam praebuit, ipsa manum."

You will be recorded on my tomb as the despicable cause; you will be known by the following verse, or one similar to it: "Demophoon gave Phyllis to death, the guest his lover; he provided the motive for murder, she the hand."

We might contrast Horace C.3.11.51-52, in which Hypermestra instructs Lynceus to remember her in his own epitaph: "...et nostri memorem sepulcro/ scalpe querelam."

Here Ariadne issues Theseus a command: that is, she does not ask him kindly to care for her remains, nor does she merely *imply* that it is his responsibility, as her former lover, to bury her. "You will carry away my bones," she tells him unequivocally. However important it is for the heroines to appear crazed and uncertain at other points in their letters, they are never shy or ambiguous about telling their lovers to shelter their bodies *once they are dead*. Thus, while giving the lover the choice between killing her and saving her, the heroine lets him know that if he chooses *not* to save her, it will be his duty to dispose of the remains.

In interpreting these utterances it should be observed that the *form* and *function* of the utterance are separate matters. The care of one's own remains is a task one hopes will be carried out by the closest family members and loved ones.²² Thus, while in *form* the heroine's utterance is merely a funeral arrangement, in *function* it is a statement of an obligation she demands of him.

I argue that this is true of the heroines' language generally: that their meaning is not just a lexical phenomenon but a discursive one. Meaning itself is the interaction of *linguistic function* with *contextual setting*.²³ In that case, then, shared linguistic knowledge is not the only key to understanding another person's utterance;

²²Antigone's example is classic: she disobeys the king's orders in order to ensure her brother a proper burial.

²³This formulation is influenced by a paper read by Sally McConnell-Ginet, "Gender, Power, and Meaning," at Yale University, New Haven, 21 March 1994.

culture and context are the other determining factors. What immediately precedes an utterance--the setting or genre, the gestures made by the speaker--all of these may be said to pour content into words that in themselves are full of lexical meaning already.

In the *Heroides* several utterances take the form, in one way or another, of a wish for death. In this section I have pointed out the importance of considering context in order to interpret the meaning of a heroine's wish to be killed. A similar pattern was observed in four letters where a heroine's wish to be killed was either preceded or followed by a wish to be saved. Although the wish for death is not exactly metaphorical, nevertheless the meaning of the utterance does extend beyond the literal or linguistic level. Its meaning is determined by the fact that it is situated in a *love letter* (as opposed to a suicide note, for instance), and that it is contradicted by a wish to be saved. Our familiarity with female stereotypes also helps us interpret the heroines' language. In view of these factors I have argued that a heroine's language functions as a strategy of informing her lover not so much of her wish to die or to be killed (which is the linguistic function of the utterance) but of her wish for the continuation of their relationship.

Self-Instruction

The first type of death-wish that I identified in the *Heroides* is set in the context of a scene of instruction: the heroine, who is depicted (by herself) as overly docile and credulous, hears or thinks she hears the voice of someone advising her to die. Dido and Sappho use this image of themselves as a strategy of persuasion, implicitly urging their lovers to come back and protect them from their own naiveté before they actually do kill themselves. In the second category of death-wishes, four heroines (Briseis, Dido, Ariadne, and Hypermestra) instruct their lovers alternately to kill them and to save them. All of these except Hypermestra portray themselves as unbalanced and torn between extremes of passion. Again the heroine's self-portrait is designed to spur the lover into action, in this case by appealing to his masculine sense of duty to help women (who are weak, emotional, and irrational) instead of harming them. Hypermestra's instructions to Lynceus differ from the others' in delivery, though not in content: she gives him his instructions in an oratorical style, not a dramatic one. That is, she does not act out alternate desires (to live and to be killed), but simply exhorts Lynceus *vel fer opem vel dede neci*.

With the exception of Hypermestra, then, the heroines that we have looked at so far all use a variation of the

death-wish in their letters, drawing a pathetic (and typically feminine) picture of themselves that will arouse their lovers' concern. At the same time, the heroines' self-effacing portraits can be understood as a form of male flattery: by playing the part of a woman who is weak, unbalanced, and naive, the heroine invites her lover to play opposite her, and be strong, reasonable, and wise.

I will now consider my third and final type of death-wish in the *Heroides*: heroines instructing *themselves* to die. Here too I maintain that the heroine employs the death-wish not as a direct threat, but as a means of advertising a pathetic aspect of her own character which will elicit, she hopes, her lover's sympathy and concern. In this context the heroines present themselves as self-loathing and wicked. They chastise themselves for falling in love (as usual in the *Heroides*, the only real crime to which the heroines confess is that of falling in love or of loving too much) and condemn themselves to death. But the fact that each of these heroines is writing a letter, instead of taking her own advice and punishing herself by death, suggests that her real purpose in publishing a wish for death is to compel the reader (her lover) to exonerate her from her sins of passion by having him deny that they were sins or crimes at all. If this rhetoric succeeds, then the lover will come back to stop her from abusing herself.

In two cases that fall into this category, the heroine links her wish for death with a wish that she had not made love. Phyllis writes to Demophoon (*Her.* 2.57-60):

Turpiter hospitium lecto cumulasse iugali
 paenitet et lateri conseruisse latus.
 Quae fuit ante illam, mallem suprema fuisset
 nox mihi, dum potui Phyllis honesta mori.

I regret that I flagrantly extended my welcome by joining you in bed and pressing my side to yours. I wish that the night before that had been my last, while I could have died as honorable Phyllis.

A strikingly similar wish appears in Canace's letter to Macareus (*Her.* 11.23-26):

O utinam, Macareu, quae nos commisit in unum,
 venisset leto serior hora meo!
 Cur unquam plus me, frater, quam frater amasti
 et tibi, non debet quod soror esse, fui?

O Macareus, if only the hour which joined us into one had come later than my death! Why ever did you love me, brother, more than a brother, and why was I to you what a sister should not be?

The heroine appears to be intent on effacing only herself: she wishes for her own death, not her lover's. But she humiliates her lover also, though it seems to be unintentional, by saying that she would sooner die than make love with him. Will the lover allow her to cast aspersions on his love-making in this way? If the heroine's rhetoric is successful, he will be goaded into defending their night (or hour) of physical passion.

By wishing she had died before they made love, the heroine appears to be criticizing only herself, but implicitly she is asking her lover to criticize her self-criticism. That is, she wants him to rebuke her and justify

their love affair by proclaiming: "I am certainly glad that you did *not* die before that hour because I enjoyed our lovemaking, and will cherish the memory forever."

Such a rebuttal is *exactly* the response that a wish for death elicits in Sappho 94. This poem opens with the statement, "I truly wish I were dead," spoken by a woman at the end of her love affair with Sappho.²⁴ "How terribly we have suffered, Sappho," she adds. To which Sappho replies, in a gentle contradiction, that their experience together was not one of misery but of pleasure and satisfaction. Though a considerable portion of the poem survives only in fragments, the essence of Sappho's response to her partner's wish to die is well preserved (6-8):

And I answered her as follows, "Farewell and leave with the memory of me, for you know that I cared for you."

She then evokes the memory of their love by listing various erotic tokens, including "many wreaths of violets and roses" (12-13), "abundant perfumed oil" (18-19) and "the soft bed" on which they satisfied their desire for each other (21-23). While it may be fair to say that Sappho does not directly address her lover's wish for death, I would argue that it is in fact a direct response to the statement "I truly wish to die." For while it is on one level a literal wish to die, it underlines also, here and throughout Ovid's *Heroides*, a wish

²⁴I read Sappho 94 as a dialogue between two lovers at the end of their affair. Anne Burnett is one of the first in the field to propose this reading, against the more popular reading (in 1979 at least) of the poem as an internal dialogue that Sappho has with herself. See Burnett's article "Desire and Memory (Sappho Frag. 94)," *CPh* 74 (1979) 16-27.

to be reassured. That is, the wish to die may literally and grammatically denote, "I wish to die," but rhetorically it means something else altogether: it is a wish not for death but for comfort, reassurance, and the abeyance of pain.²⁵

Unlike Ovid's heroines, whose letters are unanswered in the collection of single letters (*Heroides* 1-15)²⁶, the woman who tells Sappho that she wishes she were dead actually *does* receive a reassuring response from her lover. Though at the time of actual separation, the former lovers may be unable to be truly happy, the poem suggests that the *memory* of *sensual pleasure* (Sappho seems here to awaken her lover's *sensual memory*) will eventually subdue the bitterness of romantic despair. (I would contrast this with the cure that Propertius takes at the end of Book 3: he does not recover from love by *remembering* the happy times with Cynthia, but by distracting himself in Athens, and doing his best to *forget* her and his feelings for her.)

Medea's wish for death in *Heroides* 12 is of the same type as Phyllis' and Canace's, and thus it too bears comparison with Sappho 94. Medea opens her letter to Jason with the wish that she had died before their involvement began, regretting, like Phyllis and Canace, that she

²⁵Burnett (1979), interprets Sappho's response to her lover's wish for death as a form of instruction: "...in [frag. 94] Sappho delivers one of her plainest lectures on love's philosophy" (23); and "It is part of Sappho's instruction, then, that the girl should view herself and be viewed by others as a creature engaged in a repeated rite of embellishment, devotion, and celebration" (26).

²⁶Ovid reports at *Amores* 2.18.27-34 that his friend Sabinus wrote responses from the heroes to at least some of the single-letter *Heroides*.

compromised herself by falling in love. But it is not just physical passion that Medea regrets: she must confess to an even greater crime. When she fell in love with Jason, she first helped him claim the golden fleece, using her skills of sorcery; she then eloped with him and brought her brother along as a hostage. Their father chased after them as they sailed away on the Argo, but Medea escaped him by killing her brother, chopping his body into pieces, and sprinkling them into the water, so that her father was compelled to abandon his pursuit in order to collect the pieces (12.109-116). In her letter Medea seems to speak confidentially--as if writing to a friend who was not involved in the affair--when she tells Jason that she wishes she had died before any of this happened (*Her.* 12.3-8):

At tibi Colchorum, memini, regina vacavi,
 ars mea cum peteres ut tibi ferret opem:
 Tunc quae dispensant mortalia fata sorores,
 debuerant fusos evoluisse meos.
 tum potui Medea mori bene. quidquid ab illo
 produxi vitae tempore, poena fuit.

But I recollect that as Queen of Colchis I put myself at your disposal, when you asked whether my art could bring you help. At that time the sisters who distribute the fates of mortal men ought to have emptied my spindles. Then I could have died nobly as Medea. Whatever life I have led since that time has been punishment.

Like Sappho's lover in poem 94, Medea recalls only a life of suffering with Jason. The point of this statement ("my life has been punishment since I met you") is to give Jason the opportunity to correct her ("no, remember the joy..."), and to assure her that, in his mind at least, she is still--and always was--noble and good in her intentions if not always in

her actions. For while she may have betrayed her father's family, she has always been faithful to Jason. Medea hints that this is the argument that she wants him to present to her, since in the opening lines of this passage she underscores that it was out of love and concern for *him* that she acted as she did: "I had time *for you*...my art brought help *to you*." I suggest that Medea does not have a death-wish at all, but a wish for Jason's love, sympathy, and gratitude.

It is true, though, that Medea is a murderer. She is guilty, and only Jason--for whose sake she stained her hands with a brother's blood--can excuse her. She tells him that death would be her method of correcting herself, and in doing so implicitly asks him for gentler treatment.

Deianira is like Medea in that she too is guilty of a murder motivated by love. Deianira's victim is, unfortunately, Hercules, the very object of her desire. At the beginning of *Heroides* 9, her letter to him, Deianira is unaware that she has poisoned him, thinking that she has sent him a garment soaked in love potion, not deadly poison. It is in the course of the letter that she learns (from a messenger) of her fatal error. Hercules lies dying as she writes. Yet she goes on writing even after this discovery, compelled, I would argue, by the hope that he will understand her good intentions and relieve her of the guilt so that she will not have to kill herself. This, at least, is how I interpret her repeated wish to die in the letter: as a wish

for forgiveness. For Deianira would never directly ask Hercules to absolve her; instead she appeals to him through the favorite strategy of persuasion throughout the *Heroides*-- a death-wish. She keeps asking herself why she hesitates to die:

Impia quid dubitas Deianira mori?

Disloyal Deianira, why do you hesitate to die?

She reiterates the question four times in the latter part of the letter (9.146, 152, 158, 164).

This use of poetic refrain is unusual.²⁷ Where the refrain is used in Latin poetry, it usually takes the form of an exhortation. In *Amores* 1.6, for instance, Ovid employs a refrain, phrased as a command to the guard stationed at his girlfriend's door: *tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram* ("The night hours are passing; take the bolt off the door," 1.6.24, 32, 40, 48, 56).²⁸ Deianira's refrain, however, takes the form of self-interrogation, or--I would say--self-instruction. "Why don't you kill yourself?" she writes, meaning clearly, "I advise myself to die."

Why does she "hesitate to die" then? The unspoken answer to this question is that she wants to finish writing her letter to Hercules. In the course of the letter she "incidentally" lets him hear her instructing herself to die, because clearly she wants him to reassure her that her

²⁷Deianira's refrain has been compared to a specific tragic form of lament, the ephymnion; see Alessandro Barchiesi, "Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion and Ovid's *Heroides*," *HSCPh* 95 (1993) 342.

²⁸Compare the refrain in Catullus 64: *Currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi* ("Run ye spindles pulling the threads, run.').

mistake was innocent, her intentions were good, and she does not have to punish herself by death.

The last death-wish that I would like to consider is the long passage that ends *Heroides* 2, Phyllis' letter to Demophon. It is remarkable for its discursiveness. I have quoted a portion of the passage already in the context of my discussion of Propertius C.2.17, to which *Heroides* 2 alludes. It is worth quoting the passage in its entirety here (*Her.*2.131-44):

Est sinus adductos modice falcatus in arcus;
 ultima praerupta cornua mole rigent.
 hinc mihi suppositas immittere corpus in undas
 mens fuit; et, quoniam fallere pergis, erit.
 ad tua me fluctus proiectam litora portent,
 occurramque oculis intumulata tuis!
 duritia ferrum ut superes adamantaque teque,
 "non tibi sic," dices, "Phylli, sequendus eram!"
 saepe venenorum sitis est mihi; saepe cruenta
 traiectam gladio morte perire iuvat.
 colla quoque, infidis quia se nectenda lacertis
 praebuerunt, laqueis implicuisse iuvat.
 stat nece matura tenerum pensare pudorem.
 in necis electu parva futura mora est.

There is a bay, gently curved into the shape of a drawn bow; the points of the horns rise erect from a sheer mass of rock. From here it was my intention to let my body fly into the waves below; and since you continue to deceive me, it will be my intention. Having cast myself into the waves, may they carry me to your shores, where, unburied, may I meet your eyes! Though in your hardness you are stronger than iron, steel, and even yourself, you will say, "Not like this, Phyllis, ought I to have been followed by you!" I am often thirsty for poison; often it is a pleasure to die a bloody death, impaled on a sword. My neck also (because it let itself be embraced by unfaithful arms) it is a pleasure to wrap in a noose. It is decided: [loss of] my tender chastity will be compensated for by an early death. In choosing a mode of death there will be little delay.

This passage is an extreme version of other death-wishes we have looked at in the *Heroides*. Phyllis ends her letter with

an array of death images, a tour de force unprecedented in ancient literature and not soon to be surpassed in the European tradition.²⁹

Phyllis presents Demophoon with a catalogue of ways in which she might kill herself: a precipitous fall, poison, self-immolation, hanging. There is variation not only in the manner of death, but in her style of expression. She begins in a familiar literary mode, with the description of a landscape. Such passages often open with the phrase *locus est*. The *est sinus* which opens Phyllis' passage is a variant of this convention. The conventional opening is misleading, however, for the setting that Phyllis describes is not a conventional *locus amoenus*, but rather a place suitable for death. As this scene fades, another comes into focus: the site is the opposite shore, where her body will wash up and be discovered by Demophoon. The two scenes follow in sequence, and Phyllis draws them to a close as she imagines Demophoon crying, '*non tibi sic Phylli sequendus eram.*'

But despite the completion of the scenario, Phyllis postpones closure. She defers the end of the letter, because on reaching the end, she may actually kill herself. The postponement of closure indicates that it is not death that Phyllis wants, but the prolongment of her affair with Demophoon. And so even though in her letter she is dead already, Phyllis writes several times again that she *dies* ("I

²⁹Eventually this passage will be outdone, by Boccaccio's Lady Fiammetta. See discussion below.

often thirst for poison; it often gives me pleasure to die...").

Hypermestra occupies one end of the scale for the extreme brevity of her death-wish (*vel fer opem vel dede neci*); the other heroines are not as terse as she is, but neither are they as prolix as Phyllis. Usually a death-wish is expressed as a single thought, occupying one couplet or two. The passages in Dido's and Sappho's letters describing scenes in which they were instructed to die indeed are long. But in each of these the heroine focuses on only one scene, developing the image of herself being told to die in a single setting.

Earlier in this section we saw that Phyllis and Canace both write that they wish they had died before they slept with the men they love. I said that what the heroines actually want is not death at all, but a reassuring response from their lovers. The last passage in Phyllis' letter supports this interpretation of the wish for death. It is one of the only death-wishes in the *Heroides* in which the heroine actually reveals the type of response that she wants from her lover. "I was not supposed to be followed by you like this!"--Phyllis fantasizes how Demophoon will respond when her dead body washes up on his shore. In the scenario Phyllis gives herself the part of a dead woman, and depicts Demophoon *chastising* her: in her imagination he implicitly instructs her to live by telling her that she must not die.

At the beginning of this chapter I identified this contrast between the *Remedia Amoris* and the *Heroides*: in the *Remedia Amoris* Ovid instructs lovers, especially men, suffering from romantic despair *not* to kill themselves, whereas in the *Heroides* abandoned heroines are instructed to die, instruct themselves to die, and instruct their lovers to kill them. I have argued, however, that in the *Heroides* the many types of death-wish are rhetorical tactics deployed by the heroines in order to provoke their lovers to do for them precisely what Ovid does for lovers in the *Remedia*: **instruct them not to die**. In fact the *Remedia Amoris*--a work that Ovid clearly presents as a companion piece to the *Ars Amatoria*--seems in part also to be a response to the *Heroides*. I will flesh out this idea in the conclusion.

Conclusion: The *Remedia Amoris* and Beyond

I have suggested above that *Heroides* 1-15 and *Remedia Amoris* are complementary. In conclusion, I would like to discuss the relationship between these two works, and subsequently to consider their relationship to the *Ars Amatoria*. In both the *Ars* and the *Remedia*, Ovid reflects on the *Heroides*, directly and indirectly. These reflections are immediately pertinent to the main areas of my research, namely women and self-destruction.

Many of Ovid's poems are concerned primarily with the early stages of romance. Two pairs of the double *Heroides*, for instance, are letters exchanged by couples (Paris and Helen [*Her.* 16-17], Acontius and Cydippe [*Her.* 20-21]) at the start of their affairs. Likewise, in the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid answers questions concerning the first steps in the pursuit of love: where does one go to find romance, for example, and what are some successful strategies of seduction? In contrast, what the single-letter *Heroides* and the *Remedia* share, and what therefore sets them apart from Ovid's other works, is their focus on coping with the end of a love affair. The two works, however, take very different approaches to the problem of ending an affair: the *Remedia Amoris* is explicitly didactic, whereas the *Heroides* offers no direct advice at all.

Ovid first announces in the preface to the *Remedia Amoris* that his main objective is to teach the young men who have been cheated by love (*decepti iuvenes*, *Rem. Am.* 41) how to leave their girlfriends. He then adds, almost as a footnote, that the *Remedia* can also help women. The note to women is inserted rather than integrated into the poem: self-contained in two couplets, it seems to have been added at a later stage of composition. The poem's modern editors do well to enclose the note to women in parentheses, thus underscoring the basic onesidedness of Ovid's lecture (*Rem. Am.* 49-52):

(sed, quaecumque viris, vobis quoque dicta, puellae,
 credite: diversis partibus arma damus.
 e quibus ad vestros si quid non pertinet usus,
 at tamen exemplo multa docere potest.)

(But trust me, that whatever is said to men is also for you girls: I give arms to both sides. If some of my advice is not relevant to your purposes, all the same, it can teach you much by analogy.)

Having addressed both men and women in his earlier work, the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid feels obliged to make a gesture of addressing both in the *Remedia*. But once the bare gesture is made, and he has secured the trust of women ("trust me..."), he feels he has fulfilled his obligation, and continues, throughout the rest of the poem, to speak to the men in the audience. Women are briefly addressed only two more times in the poem (607-08 and 813-14). A.A.R. Henderson aptly remarks: "When he does advert to them [sc. women] again...[it] creates

the illusion that he has all along been writing for *puellae* no less than *iuvenes*, which is not at all the case."³⁰

Ovid's sporadic attempts in the *Remedia* to include women in his field of vision only serve to emphasize the poem's essential commitment to the male point of view; it does nothing to mitigate the general misogynous tone of the poem. Instead of incorporating women into the poem, and teaching them *female* ways of hurting and abusing men, the *Remedia Amoris* addresses women only in passing, and teaches men how to hurt and abuse women.

As we will see, many of the remedies for love that Ovid prescribes in the poem (such as joining the army and pursuing business) are available only to men. The situation in the poem is thus comparable to a problem we confront in health care in America: it has been pointed out, especially by women's health care advocates, that medical research relies principally on male subjects, and that, based on the results of studies on men, women seeking care are treated, in essence, as men. But as the advocates of women's health care point out, women and men are different, have different medical needs, and might respond differently to treatments. Likewise, Ovid has studied the difficulties of ending an affair from the male point of view, and prescribes a cure specifically for men. Even he admits that some of his treatments will not work for women; women reading his poem

³⁰A.A.R. Henderson, ed. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Remedia Amoris* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979) 115.

and seeking a cure for love have to "learn by analogy" how to treat themselves.

In breaking off an affair, Ovid strongly disapproves of suicide (*Rem. Am.* 13-22). He instructs the readers to take positive measures to heal their broken hearts. "Venus loves idleness," Ovid warns (*Venus otia amat*, 143), thus advising the reader to keep himself occupied with serious and manly pursuits such as business, war, farming, hunting, and travel. He also encourages the reader to look at his girlfriend in only the most negative light. "She should be called 'fat' if she is full-figured; if she has a dark complexion, let her be called 'black'" (327). Additionally, Ovid recommends replacing the old girlfriend with a new one (461-86), and exercising indifference in the company of the one he is trying to break with: "Take care not to be moved by the tears of girls: they have taught their eyes how to weep" (*neve puellarum lacrimis moveare, caveto:/ ut flerent, oculos erudiere suos*, 689-90).

The *Heroides*, on the other hand, is presented neither as didactic nor as contemporary, since its heroines exist in ancient myths. It does, however, dovetail with the *Remedia* in one important respect: the heroines, abandoned by the men they still love, would be the perfect candidates for the sort of advice that Ovid claims to offer men and women in the *Remedia Amoris*. Because they do not receive such treatment, many of the heroines seem to act in exactly the manner that Ovid advises *against* in the *Remedia*: they depict themselves

as languishing in idleness and despair, feeding their erotic obsessions, and contemplating suicide.

Twice, in fact, Ovid adduces his heroines as *negative examples*, in order to teach the readers of the *Remedia Amoris* how *not* to behave during a break-up. At *Remedia* 55-64, he summarizes the myths connected with Phyllis, Dido, Medea, and Phaedra, all of whom, except Medea, killed themselves for love. Ovid suggests he could have saved their lives if he had been their teacher.

Later in the poem (579-607) he devotes considerable space to the plight of Phyllis in particular, while warning the recovering lover to avoid solitary places: *loca sola caveto* (579). He says that an unhappy lover is "safer"--less likely to commit suicide, that is--if he mingles in crowds: *in populo tutior esse potes* (*Rem Am.* 580). The mythical heroine Phyllis, Ovid writes, was ignorant of this precept, and it was because of this that she killed herself (*Rem. Am.* 591-608):

quid nisi secretae laeserunt Phyllida silvae?
 certa necis causa est: incommitata fuit.
 ibat, ut Edono referens trieterica Baccho
 ire solet fuis barbara turba comis,
 et modo, qua poterat, longum spectabat in aequor,
 nunc in harenosa lassa iacebat humo;
 'perfide Demophon' surdas clamabat ad undas,
 ruptaque singultu verba loquentis erant.
 limes erat tenuis, longa subnubilus umbra,
 qua tulit illa suos ad mare saepe pedes.
 nona terebatur miserae via; 'viderit' inquit
 et spectat zonam pallida facta suam,
 aspicit et ramos: dubitat refugitque quod audet,
 et timet et digitos ad sua colla refert.
 Sithoni, tum certe vellem non sola fuisses:
 non flesset positus silva comis.
 Phyllidis exemplo nimium secreta timete,

laese vir a domina, laesa puella viro.

What except the privacy of the woods killed Phyllis? The cause of her death is certain: she was companionless. She went forth--just as every other year a crowd of foreign women returning to Bacchus with hair flying free customarily goes forth--and first, where she could, she gazed over the open sea, and then lay down exhausted on the sandy ground. "Traacherous Demophon!" she kept shouting to the deaf waves, her words broken by a sob as she spoke them. There was a narrow path, darkened by long shadows, which she often followed to the sea. The unhappy woman was treading it for the ninth time. "It will be his problem!" she says, and turning pale, she gazes at her belt, and stares at the branches: she hesitates, shrinking from what she dares, she is afraid and fingers her throat. Sithonian, I do wish you had not then been alone: the forest had not mourned Phyllis, shedding its leaves. [Ovid turns to the reader] Learn from the example of Phyllis, and fear places that are too solitary, o man wounded by a mistress, o girl wounded by a man.

This passage (one of the three times Ovid addresses women in the audience) serves as an epilogue to *Heroides 2*, Phyllis' letter to Demophon. That letter ends with Phyllis' threat to kill herself; Ovid takes this opportunity in the *Remedia Amoris* to resume the story and describe her final moments--or what happens, that is, after she writes the letter.

But the *Remedia* is not only an epilogue to *Heroides 2*, it is also an interpretation. Ovid uses the *Remedia* partly to clarify an important aspect of the *Heroides*--the rhetoric of self-destruction--while speaking in his persona as a love poet and teacher. In the *Heroides* itself he is silent on this point; nowhere in the work do we feel Ovid's overt presence as its author. The heroines' letters are composed solely in the heroines' voices, without the poet's explicit editorializing. Therefore, nothing in the *Heroides* interferes

with the dramatic illusion that the author is not Ovid but each individual *heroine*.

To find Ovid's authorial voice, his commentary on the *Heroides*, we turn then to the *Remedia Amoris*. Here Ovid explicitly guides the male reader in the process of breaking away from his girlfriend, and *vice versa*. I would add, however, that in the *Remedia* Ovid also guides the audience in the process of reading the *Heroides*. Do his readers understand that the heroines are not intended to be *role models* when they are breaking off their own love affairs? The *Heroides* is love poetry, and as Ovid says, love poetry stirs up erotic feelings. The *Remedia's* aim, meanwhile, is to teach readers how to quell such feelings. How can Ovid ensure that no reader, inspired by the heroines' letters, will kill himself or herself? The heroines' letters seem to set a standard for "true love," or for genuine erotic anguish. Because so many of the heroines--almost all of them in fact--demonstrate their urgency and sincerity by wishing for death, the *Heroides* can leave the reader with the impression that these lovers' self-destructive impulses are sincere, and, moreover, *normative*. In the *Remedia* Ovid sets out to correct that notion.

In fact the reason he gives for writing the *Remedia Amoris* in the first place is the fear that his love poetry, in which he tends to advocate complete dedication to the erotic life (whether directly, as in the *Ars*, or indirectly, as in the *Amores* and *Heroides*), may lead the reader to self-

destruction. In the preface to the *Remedia* Ovid discusses this possibility with Cupid, his partner in several previous erotic endeavors, persuading the god of love that it is their mutual responsibility to protect their followers from love's excesses (*Rem. Am.* 33-38):

"fac coeant furtim iuvenes timidaeque puellae
 verbaque dent cauto qualibet arte viro,
 et modo blanditias rigido, modo iurgia, posti
 dicat et exclusus flebile cantet amans.
 his lacrimis contentus eris sine crimine mortis:
 non tua fax avidos digna subire rogos."

"Go ahead, let young men and shy girls hold clandestine meetings, and let them, by any trickery they can, tell lies to a suspicious husband, and let the lover who has been shut out cajole her unyielding door one minute, curse it the next, and sing a mournful tune. If you satisfy yourself with tears such as these, you will be innocent of the charge of murder: your torch does not deserve to be set beneath greedy funeral pyres."

Saving lives is thus the poet's principal objective. He wants to avoid incurring guilt for murder.

Often we have been told that the *Remedia Amoris* and the *Ars Amatoria* form a diptych. This seems reasonable since both works are explicitly didactic, and since the first instructs the reader how to get a lover, while the second gives advice on *getting over* a lover. But there is a sense in which the *Remedia* responds more directly to the *Heroides* than to the *Ars Amatoria*; I suggest that the *Remedia* is in effect a palinode to the *Heroides*. The goal of the *Remedia*, as Ovid states in the preface, is to save lovers from self-destruction. Was it in the *Ars Amatoria* that Ovid taught the public how to die of love? Not at all. As I have tried to

show, it is the heroines' letters that "teach" (implicitly or potentially) the art of self-destruction, or *the rhetorical art of wishing and threatening to die*. In this respect, the antecedent to the *Remedia Amoris* is not the *Ars Amatoria*, but rather the *Heroides*, as the case of Phyllis demonstrates. In the *Heroides*, Phyllis writes to Demophoon of her wish to hang herself, stab herself, drink poison, and so forth; the letter then closes, leaving us in suspense about her fate. In the *Remedia Amoris*, Ovid reports that Phyllis ultimately did hang herself, and charges the reader to avoid repeating her mistake: "Do not be like Phyllis," he says (to paraphrase). "Avoid solitude and despair, and do not kill yourself."³¹

But the *Remedia Amoris* is not the only place where Ovid responds to his heroines' self-destructive inclinations. In the *Ars Amatoria*, the poem written before the *Remedia*, Ovid offers a completely different approach to the *Heroides*, suggesting that his female readers use fictional love letters as an aid to seduction. In Book Three of *Ars Amatoria*--the one book that is addressed specifically to women--Ovid tells women to seduce men with song. "Let girls learn to sing," he

³¹It is interesting to note that in the Middle Ages the *Heroides* was a popular school text, taught as a set of counter-examples. As Ralph Hexter has shown in a study of school commentaries of the period, students were guided in their interpretation of the *Heroides* by commentary explaining that almost all of the heroines are intended to be negative examples. Hexter writes: "A moralizing, though in no way explicitly Christian aim, was imputed to Ovid, the 'auctor'--namely, to praise chaste love. The prime example of chaste love was Penelope, the sender of the first epistle. Others are few and far between; instead, the many wicked heroines were conceived of as counter examples." Ralph J. Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling: Studies in Medieval School Commentaries on Ovid's "Ars Amatoria," "Epistulae ex Ponto," and "Epistulae Heroidum"* (Munich: Arceo-Gesellschaft, 1986) 213.

declares: *discant cantare puellae* (AA 3.315). He proceeds to draw up a list of suitable Greek and Latin love poetry, on which are featured the works of Callimachus, Anacreon, Sappho, Propertius, Gallus, and Tibullus (AA 3.315-38). At the end of this passage Ovid expresses the hope that one day his own love poetry will be recommended to women for the same purpose, that is, for the purpose of seducing men. The three works Ovid names in this context are his *Ars Amatoria*, *Amores*, and *Heroides* (AA 3.339-46):

forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis
 nec mea Lethaeis scripta dabuntur aquis
 atque aliquis dicet 'nostri lege culta magistri
 carmina, quis partes instruit ille duas,
 deve tribus libris, titulo quos signat AMORUM,
 elige, quod docili molliter ore legas,
 vel tibi composita cantetur EPISTULA voce;
 ignotum hoc aliis ille novavit opus.'

Perhaps my name too will be mixed with these [other love poets' names], and my writings will not be given to Lethe's waters, and someone will say, "Read the sophisticated songs of our master, who instructed both parties [i.e. men and women], or select something from the three books, which he marks with the heading *Amores*, to recite softly in docile tones, or let an *Epistle* be sung by you in a practiced voice; with this piece he invented a genre unknown to others."

Ovid does not distinguish among the three works on love, but simply groups them together under a single heading, as poetry that, when sung by women to men, may be conducive to romance.

There are, however, differences among the three works. Chief among them is the fact that the *Heroides*, unlike the *Ars Amatoria* and *Amores*, is written in female voices. Consequently, if a woman sings a piece from either of the other works mentioned--the *Ars Amatoria* or *Amores*--it is

clear that she is not representing her own points of view, but is singing, rather, or quoting, a poem composed by Ovid, a male poet. If, however, she serenades her lover with the *Heroides*, something different and quite remarkable occurs. The scenario that Ovid has *poetically depicted* in the single-letter *Heroides*, of a woman addressing her lover, occurs *in reality*. That is, a *real* woman sings to the man she desires in the words of a fictional heroine writing to the man *she* desires.

It is apparently the reader's responsibility--especially the female reader's--to distinguish the didactic from the entertaining. In the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid predicts that the heroines' letters will put men into a romantic mood, and that women can exploit the poetry's power by singing to men about the erotic longings and self-destructive impulses of other women. Yet in the *Remedia Amoris* Ovid clearly opposes the stirring up of such feelings. He instructs the readers to restrain their emotions and their self-destructive impulses at the end of their love affairs. Where the *Heroides* portrays the unrestrained emotions of women abandoned by men, the *Remedia Amoris* urges readers to exercise emotional restraint at the end of an affair.

Ovid's intentions may have been democratic. He may have wanted his poetry to give pleasure to both men and women, and to be appreciated by both sexes. Whether he is ultimately fair to women, and what effect his portrayal of women has had on the western tradition, are the questions to be addressed

by the present generation of readers, classicists and feminists alike. The three works examined here suggest that, whatever his intentions, Ovid found it difficult (or unprofitable) to divide his concerns equally between women and men. *Heroides* 1-15, for example, the single letters, are poems written in only *female* voices. It is not just that Ovid composes one poem from the point of view of an abandoned woman; he writes *fifteen* of them, all from abandoned *heroines*, and none from abandoned *heroes*.

Ovid evidently does have compassion for real people, men and women, as the *Remedia Amoris* bears out.³² And it is true that, writing in an age in which men governed women, Ovid often stands out for his efforts to treat men and women equally. He is more inclusive of women than perhaps any other Roman poet. After dedicating two books of the *Ars Amatoria* to men, for example, he writes one for women. And after announcing that the *Remedia Amoris* is written for "cheated young men," he promises women that the poem can help them too, *mutatis mutandis* (*Rem. Am.* 49-52). But the poem ultimately neglects the particular needs of women, and as a result turns into a handbook of specific strategies of *abusing* women: it recommends calling a woman "fat," for example, if her figure is well rounded; ignoring her emotional outbursts, and cheating on her. The *Remedia* contains hundreds of strategies of insulting women. In

³²Compassion for the heroines is shown by Ovid's friend Sabinus, who, as I mentioned before (citing *Am.* 2.18.27-34), wrote answers from the heroes to some of the single-letter *Heroides*.

short, Ovid stocks the male arsenal with weapons against women, but fails to live up to his claim, that he "give[s] arms to both sides" (*Rem. Am.* 50).

He meanwhile (in *Ars Amatoria* 3) encourages women to sing the *Heroides* to their lovers. Women, in other words, are permitted to impersonate the heroines, and imitate their high emotions (since recitation is a form of imitation), whereas men, though Ovid invites them to be seduced by the *Heroides*, are warned by Ovid not to imitate this discourse--"women's" discourse, he implies--in their own lives. Women, that is, are encouraged to contaminate their lives with the emotions of literature, while men are strongly advised to avoid this contamination.

Thus, reflecting on the *Heroides* (in the *Ars* and *Remedia*), Ovid insists that men, at least, separate the pleasures of literature from the pleasures of real life. He suggests that while it may be pleasant to contemplate the misery and pain of a *fictional character* in poetry or tragedy, it is unpleasant to experience such feeling in one's own life. It is entertaining, in other words, to read the *Heroides*, but one would not enjoy being in the position of the abandoned and suicidal lover. This same contrast between the pleasures of life and the pleasures of literature is underlined by Plato in Book Ten of the *Republic* (605d-e):

...the very best of us, when we hear Homer or some other of the makers of tragedy imitating one of the heroes who is in grief, and is delivering a long tirade in his lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon ourselves and accompany the

representation with sympathy and eagerness, and we praise as an excellent poet the one who most strongly affects us in this way....But when in our own lives some affliction comes to us,...we plume ourselves upon the opposite, on our ability to remain calm and endure, in the belief that this is the conduct of a man, and what we were praising in the theatre that of a woman.³³

It is interesting--though not surprising--to note that, with regard to the emotions and their expression, Plato has one standard for men and another for women. Women are excluded from the statement, "we plume ourselves...on our ability to remain calm and endure" (emphasis added). "We" in this statement refers not to "we humans," but "we men," that is, "we males." Plato observes, by contrast, that women do not conduct themselves in a restrained and orderly fashion. Women, it seems, do not "remain calm and endure" in the face of calamity. Women, he implies, deliver long tirades; they lament, chant, and beat their breasts in reality, as men are seen to do only on stage.

The tone of the passage implies that Plato is recording the plain facts of the matter: men control their emotions, and women vent theirs uncontrollably. But is this an irrefutable truth about the difference between the sexes? Or is Plato's observation less a reflection on how things are in reality, than a prescription for how Plato wants them to be? Plato, I think, wants men to curb their emotions. If there were empirical evidence that men in Plato's society already did restrain their emotions, what need would there be to shelter them from poetry? In the end Plato's argument is

³³Paul Shorey, tr., *Plato: Republic*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1987) 459.

hamstrung by his refusal to admit the weakness of men. The boast that men already pride themselves on their emotional restraint precludes the need to protect them from the appearance of unrestrained emotion in poetry.

Ovid would not favor a total ban on love poetry in his society, yet he appears to make similar distinctions between art and life, and as a corollary, between men and women. He shares Plato's view that however pleasurable the contemplation of certain emotions in love poetry might be, to experience them in one's own love-life is unpleasant. He thus permits men to enjoy listening to women singing the *Heroides*, but he tries to prevent them from reproducing the heroines' emotions in their own lives. Because the *Remedia* is written from a male perspective, it is primarily men who are advised to practice emotional restraint; Ovid appears to accept Plato's judgment that women are emotionally expressive. In fact, Ovid claims that women typically employ outbursts of emotion as a strategy of manipulation. "Take care," he warns the men, "not to be moved by the tears of girls: they have taught their eyes how to weep" (*neve puellarum lacrimis moveare, caveto:/ ut flerent, oculos erudiere suos, Rem Am.* 689-90) At such junctures in the poem, when Ovid undermines female erotic experience, it is easy to doubt the sincerity of his claim to "give arms to both sides." What could a female reader learn "by analogy" from this advice? Such disparaging descriptions of female "nature" are sprinkled

throughout the poem, never compensated for by the addition of a corresponding portrait of male nature.

There is something ultimately more insidious about Ovid's representation of women than Plato's. In the *Republic*, Plato reveals in a straightforward manner his disgust with men who act "like women." But the *Republic* is a philosophical text, and while its impact on our culture has been great, it has generally been read (along with Plato's other works) by educated men--students and scholars, not the general populace. Women did not start reading Plato until relatively late, and thus Plato does not directly affect the way women see themselves. Ovid's poems, on the other hand, have insinuated themselves into the public consciousness because of their popularity and fictionality, and because of their great influence on later writers.

Readers of the *Heroides* after Ovid

I would like, then, to sketch briefly the history of the reading and interpretation of Ovid's *Heroides* as it is reflected in the western literary tradition. For I would argue that the *Heroides* has long influenced the way in which European writers have depicted women in love. I suggest, moreover, that *the wish for death has persisted as an essential feature in the portraits of such women*. As a result I would theorize that Ovid's *Heroides* has influenced

the way in which female writers portray female characters and ultimately how female writers express themselves.

Two prominent epistolary fictions composed in the manner of the *Heroides* are Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* (1343-45), and the letters of a nun named Mariana published anonymously in France as *The Portuguese Letters* (1669). In each of these *male-authored* texts, the abandoned and lamenting letter-writer is depicted as female. There is no tradition of fictive epistles written from a male perspective comparable to the tradition of fictive epistles written (by male authors) from a female perspective. It has been said that with the *Heroides* Ovid invented the fictive epistle. I would add that the writers I have mentioned learned from the *Heroides* not only a literary form, but also a literary voice—the voice of an abandoned heroine.³⁴

Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* is presented as an open letter sent by Lady Fiammetta to all women in love. The *Elegy* relates the story of Fiammetta's abiding love for a foreign visitor named Panfilo (from Greek, *pan*, "all," and *phileo*, "love"). Panfilo and Fiammetta engage in a brief love affair, after which Panfilo returns to his homeland, leaving Fiammetta in a state of longing and despair. Fiammetta records her response to his departure in the letter. "At first I thought of sharp metal weapons," she writes:

³⁴I am here emphasizing the influence of the *Heroides* on the poetic tradition; another major source of abandoned heroines' laments is Ariadne's lament in Catullus 64. See Lawrence I. Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), esp. ch. 1 on Ariadne.

which have caused the death of many, when I recalled that Elissa, whom I already mentioned, died that way. Then, I pictured to myself the death of Byblis and Amata, whose methods of dying suggested themselves as a means to end my life....Then I imagined doing what the Saguntans did for fear of Hannibal the Carthaginian and what, for fear of Philip the Macedonian, the citizens of Abydos did by committing their belongings and themselves to the flames....Then I thought of poisonous drinks which in the past had brought an end to the days of Socrates, Sophonisba, Hannibal, and many other princes....However, among all these ways of dying, I thought of the death of Perdix, who fell from the highest rock of Crete, and it pleased me to choose this kind of sure death free from all infamy, and I said to myself, 'If I throw myself from the highest part of my house, my body, shattering into hundreds of pieces, will release my unhappy, stained, and broken soul through each piece to the fiendish gods....'³⁵

This catalogue of ways to die is even longer than that of Phyllis in *Heroides* 2. We might also compare the stated purpose of Boccaccio's *Elegy* with that of Ovid's *Heroides*. Ovid says in the *Ars Amatoria* that he hopes women will some day serenade men with selections from the *Heroides* in order to seduce them. The heroines' laments, in other words, might be perceived by a male audience as erotic and entertaining. In the Prologue to *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*, on the other hand, Fiammetta states that "[she] does not care if [her] speech does not reach the ears of men; in fact if [she] could, [she] would entirely keep it away from them" (1). Her objective, she says, is to "awaken pity" in the "noble ladies" who hear her lament, so that she will have greater pleasure in lamenting: "Unhappy people customarily take greater pleasure in lamenting their lot when they see or hear

³⁵Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*, tr. Mariangela Causa-Steindler and Thomas Mauch (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1990) 119-121.

that someone else feels compassion for them" (1).

Boccaccio's *Elegy* thus promotes the idea of deriving *pleasure from lamentation*, Plato's worst nightmare in the *Republic*.

Mariana's letters to her foreign lover, the travelling Marquis de Chamilly, tell a similar story. Following the now familiar pattern, the love affair of Mariana and the Marquis is cut short by his departure. The abandoned woman writes letters to her lover expressing the longing for his return and the wish to be dead:

If I loved you as much as I have told you a thousand times, should I not have died long ago? I have deceived you; it is for you to reproach me....Treat me harshly, reproach me that my emotions are not ardent enough; be more difficult to please; let me hear you wish me to die of love....A tragic end would no doubt oblige you to think of me often; my memory would grow dear to you, and you might even be deeply touched by my unusual death. Would not death be better than the state to which you have brought me? Adieu....³⁶

We can see in this passage the influence of Ovid's heroines who beg their lovers to kill them. Mariana also seems to hold herself to a standard set by Ovid's heroines: if her love and pain were truly ardent, she would die, wouldn't she? Mariana's letters form an interesting chapter in the study of the female rhetoric of self-destruction because of their obscure authorship. Ever since their publication in France in 1669, the author's identity has been disputed. Did a real nun named Mariana write the letters in sincere despair? Or were they written by a man as an exercise in romantic

³⁶*The Portuguese Letters*, tr. Donald E. Ericson, printed in Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, and Maria Velho da Costa, *The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters* (NY: Doubleday, 1975) 403-29, esp. 416.

fiction, perhaps even an exercise in forgery?³⁷ I believe that they are fictive epistles; there is a compulsion, however, among the reading public to want to believe that the character Mariana was a real woman.

I suggest that the distinction between real women and fictional heroines becomes weaker with time, especially as more women become published writers. When a substantial number of women started to publish in the eighteenth century, there was already a particular mode or style of discourse designated "women's writing," a style established by male authors. We can trace the development of this style of discourse by following the influence of the *Heroides* through literary history.

To elucidate this idea, in the remaining pages I would like to lay out a short history of the survival and reception of the *Heroides* in English poetry in particular, and then look closely at a few examples of modern (i.e. post-Renaissance) English works that I think reflect the internalization of the rhetoric of female self-destruction in the English tradition.

Though out of fashion in the early Christian period, the *Heroides* was frequently read, translated, and imitated from the Middle Ages on. In English literature the influence of the *Heroides* is first felt in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (written between 1372-86), a work which has been described as

³⁷For discussion of the debated authorship, see Kauffman (1986) 92-117, esp. 92-100.

"a martyrology, lists of well-known queens, nymphs and noblewomen who have given all and lost all for love."³⁸ Almost two centuries later, in 1567, George Turberville published a translation of Ovid's *Heroides* titled *Heroycall Epistles*. Michael Drayton, in 1597, used the *Heroides* as the model for *England's Heroicall Epistles*, a collection of twelve pairs of verse letters exchanged by lovers from English history.³⁹

The first edition of John Donne's poems in 1633 contained a poem called "Sappho to Philaenis," a fictional verse-letter clearly inspired by *Heroides* 15, Sappho's letter to Phaon (though Phaon is a male lover while Philaenis a female).⁴⁰ In 1680 a new English translation of *Ovid's Epistles* appeared. It was "translated by several hands," including that of John Dryden, who was responsible for three of the epistles (Canace's to Macareus, Helen's to Paris, and Dido's to Aeneas) and for the *Preface Concerning Ovid's Epistles* printed in the 1683 edition.⁴¹

³⁸Rachel Trickett, "The *Heroides* and the English Augustans," in *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 194. Chaucer's "good women" are Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle, Medea, Lucrece, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis, and Hypermestra. Six of these are familiar to us from Ovid's *Heroides*.

³⁹"Michael Drayton," in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 292. For further discussion of the *Heroides* in Tudor England see Deborah S. Greenhut, *Feminine Rhetorical Culture: Tudor Adaptations of Ovid's "Heroides"* (NY: Peter Lang, 1988). On the *Heroides* in England's Augustan period, see Rachel Trickett, "The *Heroides* and the English Augustans," in *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 191-204.

⁴⁰See Elizabeth D. Harvey, "Ventriloquizing Sappho: Ovid, Donne, and the Erotics of the Feminine Voice," *Criticism* 31, no. 2 (Spring, 1989) 115-138.

⁴¹Dryden also wrote a lament in the voice of an abandoned woman. It opens:

Farewell ungrateful traitor,

The *Heroides* is thus very much in evidence in the English tradition, most clearly in translations and imitations that reproduce the stories of the very same heroines Ovid depicted, or the epistolary form that he pioneered, or both. After enjoying several centuries of this kind of afterlife, the *Heroides* seems to have become ingrained and internalized in the English literary mind. The lament of the abandoned woman, with its attendant death-wish, survived on its own as a commonplace in English poetry. It provides the foundation, for example, for Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard" (1717), and Tennyson's "Oenone," published in 1832. In his retelling of Oenone's abandonment by Paris, Tennyson discards the epistolary form, but retains the lament itself. Like the letters that make up the *Heroides*, "Oenone" is the lament of an abandoned woman, addressed not to her lover in this case, but to Mount Ida, the wilderness which she inhabits. Though Oenone never utters an explicit wish for death, she indicates throughout her sad complaint that she is on the verge of dying. Nineteen of the poem's stanzas begin with some variation on the lines: "'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,/ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.'"⁴²

Farewell my perjured swain,
Let never injured creature
Believe a man again.

And closes:

Your love by ours we measure
Till we have lost our treasure,
But dying is a pleasure,
When living is a pain.

⁴²Variations include "O mother Ida, harken ere I die"; "Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die"; and "O mother, hear me yet before I die."

An explicit death-wish is, however, the refrain of Tennyson's "Mariana," published in 1830. There are actually two poems about Mariana ("Mariana" and "Mariana in the South" [1832]), both suggested by Shakespeare's Mariana (of "the moated grange") in *Measure for Measure*. In both poems Tennyson depicts women waiting in misery and loneliness for the return of their lovers. All seven stanzas of the 1830 "Mariana" end with some variation on the refrain:

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"⁴³

The loss of the epistolary frame constitutes an important distinction between the *Heroides* and "Mariana." In the *Heroides* the death-wish is a strategy of persuasion: each poem is not a dramatic monologue, but a *letter* addressed by the heroine to her lover. I have argued that in this context the death-wish is less a sincere reflection of the heroine's wish to die, than a rhetorical strategy designed to elicit the lover's concern and effect his return. In "Mariana," on the other hand, the heroine utters the death-wish to herself. Thus, while Ovid's *Heroides* may represent the death-wish as a component in the erotic discourse of women addressing their lovers, Tennyson's "Mariana" puts it in the context of a

⁴³The final stanza has this variant:
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

In Sir John Squire, ed. *Selected Poems of Tennyson* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1947) 1-3.

woman alone, *speaking to herself*. The motivation is the same: a woman abandoned by her lover says she wants to die. But Mariana says it not to her lover, but to herself and to the reader.

The *Heroides* thus is to be found at the foundation of two very strong branches of English literary tradition. It is often said that the epistolary genre, including the epistolary novel (e.g. Richardson's *Clarissa*), starts with the *Heroides*. I have sketched another tradition initiated by Ovid's *Heroides*: that of the abandoned heroine who wishes to die. This type of heroine appears in many genres, including poetry, novels, letters, and films. The question I would like to raise in conclusion, and in anticipation of English and American criticism yet to be done, is whether this heroine is restricted to the pages of fiction and of male-authored texts, or whether she is constructed also in texts that are neither fictional nor produced by men. The scope of this project, and my own limitations as a classicist, allow me only to ask this question here; I cannot begin to answer it. I would like, however, to conclude my discussion with an excerpt from a letter written in 1839 by Charlotte Bronte to one of her closest friends, Elizabeth Gaskell, in which she describes recently receiving, and turning down, a proposal of marriage. Bronte and Gaskell are among the greatest novelists in English history; Charlotte Bronte is arguably the greatest English woman novelist. If this thesis should ever attract the interest of someone wishing to pursue the

study of the rhetoric of female self-destruction in English letters (in the broad sense), she would perhaps begin her own inquiry with this passage:

I had a kindly leaning towards him, because he is an amiable and well-disposed man. Yet I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband.⁴⁴

⁴⁴In Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte* [1857] (NY: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1958) 112.

Bibliography

Greek and Latin Texts and Commentaries

- Barber, E.A., ed. *Sexti Properti Carmina*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2nd ed. 1960.
- Campbell, David A. *Greek Lyric Poetry*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982.
- Conacher, D.J. *Euripides: "Alcestis."* Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips, 1988.
- Dale, A.M., ed. *Euripides: "Alcestis."* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954.
- Diggle, J., ed. *Euripides Fabulae*. vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, rpt. 1991.
- Dörrie, Henricus, ed. *P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroidum*. Berlin and NY: Walter De Gruyter, 1971.
- England, E.B., ed. *The "Iphigeneia at Aulis" of Euripides*. London and NY: Macmillan and Co., 1891.
- Gerber, Douglas E. *Euterpe: An Anthology of Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac, and Iambic Poetry*. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970.
- Henderson, A.A.R., ed. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Remedia Amoris*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979.
- Kenney, E.J., ed. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Amores, Medicamina Faciei Femineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris*. Oxford: Oxford UP, rpt. 1986.
- Monro, David B. and Thomas W. Allen, eds. *Homeri Opera*. 2 vols. 1902. Oxford: Oxford UP, rpt. 1976-78.
- Murray, Gilbert, ed. *Euripidis Fabulae*. vol. 3. Oxford: Oxford UP, rpt. 1978.
- Palmer, Arthur, ed. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Heroides*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1898.
- Postgate, J.P., ed. *Tibulli Aliorumque Carminum Libri Tres*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2nd ed. 1915.
- Richardson, L., Jr., ed. *Propertius: Elegies I-IV*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1977.

Solmsen, Friedrich, ed. *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 3rd ed. 1990.

Voigt, Eva-Maria, ed. *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak and Van Gennepe, 1971.

Wilkins, John. *Euripides: Heraclidae*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

Secondary Sources

Adams, J.N. "Female Speech in Latin Comedy." *Antichthon* 18 (1984) 43-77.

Adkins, Arthur W.H. "Basic Greek Values in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Hercules Furens*." *CQ* n.s.16 (1966) 193-219.

----- . *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1960.

Alexiou, M. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974.

Anderson, W.S. "The *Heroides*." *Ovid*. ed. J.W. Binns. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Arthur, Marilyn B. "The Divided World of *Iliad* VI." *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*. ed. Helene P. Foley. NY: Gordon and Breach, Science Publishers, 1981. 19-44.

----- . "The Dream of a World without Women: Poetics and the Circles of Order in the *Theogony* Prooemium." *Arethusa* 16 (1983) 97-116.

----- . "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude toward Women." *Arethusa* 6 (1973) 7-58.

Atchity, Kenneth and E.J.W. Barber. "Greek Princes and Aegean Princesses: The Role of Women in the Homeric Poems." *Critical Essays on Homer*. eds. Kenneth Atchity, et al. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1987. 15-36.

Austin, N. *Helen of Troy and Her Shameless Phantom*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, forthcoming.

Baca, Albert R. "Ovid's Claim to Originality and *Heroides* 1." *TAPA* 100 (1969) 1-10.

----- . "Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon (*Heroides* 15)." *TAPA* 102 (1971) 29-38.

- . "The Themes of *Querela* and *Lacrimae* in Ovid's *Heroides*." *Emerita* 39 (1971) 195-201.
- Baker, Robert J. "*Laus in amore mori: Love and Death in Propertius*." *Latomus* 29 (1970) 670-98.
- Barchiesi, Alessandro. "Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion and Ovid's *Heroides*." *HSCPh* 95 (1993) 333-65.
- . "Narrativita e convenzione nelle *Heroides*." *MD* 19 (1987) 63-90.
- Barsby, John A. "The Composition and Publication of the First Three Books of Propertius." *G&R* 21 (1974) 128-37.
- Bassi, Karen. "The Actor as Actress in Euripides' *Alcestis*." *Themes in Drama* 11 (1989) 19-30.
- . "Helen and the Discourse of Denial in Stesichorus' *Palinode*." *Arethusa* 26 (1993) 51-75.
- Bergren, Ann L.T. "Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought." *Arethusa* 16 (1983) 69-95.
- Bespaloff, Rachel. *On the "Iliad"*. tr. Mary McCarthy. Washington: Pantheon Books, 1947: rpt. in *Homer: A Collection of Essays*. eds. G. Steiner and R. Fagles. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962. 100-04.
- Beye, Charles Rowan, tr. "*Alcestis*" by Euripides. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- . "Alcestis and Her Critics." *GRBS* 2 (1959) 111-27.
- . "Male and Female in the Homeric Poems." *Ramus* 3 (1974) 87-101.
- Blaiklock, E.M. *The Male Characters in Euripides: A Study in Realism*. Wellington: New Zealand UP, 1952.
- Bloom, Harold. *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1977.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*. [ca.1344-45] ed. and tr. Mariangela Causa-Steindler and Thomas Mauch. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1990.
- Bradley, C.J. "Ovid *Heroides* V: Reality and Illusion." *CJ* 64 (1969) 158-62.
- Bradley, Edward M. "Admetus and the Triumph of Failure in the *Alcestis*." *Ramus* 9 (1980) 112-27.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity*

- and the Aesthetic. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992.
- Brooks, Peter. *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Brownlee, Marina Scordilis. *The Severed Word: Ovid's "Heroides" and the "Novela Sentimental."* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990.
- Burian, Peter, ed. *Directions in Euripidean Criticism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1985.
- . "Euripides' Heraclidae: An Interpretation." *CPh* 72 (1977) 1-21.
- Burkert, Walter. *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1979.
- Burnett, Anne Pippin. *Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971.
- . "Desire and Memory (Sappho Fragment 94)." *CPh* 74 (1979) 16-27.
- . "Rhesus: Are Smiles Allowed?" *Directions in Euripidean Criticism*. ed. Peter Burian. Durham: Duke UP, 1985. 13-51
- . *Three Archaic Poets: Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983.
- . "Tribe and City, Custom and Decree in *Children of Heracles*." *CPh* 71 (1976) 4-26.
- . "The Virtues of Admetus." *CPh* 60 (1965) 240-55.
- Cahoon, Leslie. "Let the Muse Sing On: Poetry, Criticism, Feminism, and the Case of Ovid." *Helios* 17 (1990) 197-211.
- Calhoun, George M. "Polity and Society: The Homeric Picture." *A Companion to Homer*. eds. Alan J.B. Wace and Frank H. Stubbings. NY: The Macmillan Co., 1963. 431-52.
- Cantarella, Eva. *Pandora's Daughters: The Role of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. tr. Maureen B. Fant. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1987.
- Carson, Anne. "Putting Her in Her Place: Women, Dirt, and Desire." *Before Sexuality: The Construction of the Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*. eds. David Halperin, et al. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990. 135-69.

- Castellani, Victor. "Warlords and Women in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*." *Drama, Sex, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985. 1-10.
- Chant, Dale. "Role Inversion and its Function in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*." *Ramus* 15 no.2 (1986) 83-92.
- Clader, Linda Lee. *Helen: The Evolution from Divine to Heroic in Greek Epic Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- Conacher, D.J. *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme, and Structure*. Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1967.
- . "Euripides' *Hecuba*." *AJP* 82 (1961) 1-26.
- Culham, Phyllis. "Decentering the Text: The Case of Ovid." *Helios* 17 (1990) 161-70.
- Cunningham, Maurice P. "The Novelty of Ovid's *Heroides*." *CP* 44 (1949) 100-106.
- Decharme, Paul. *Euripides and the Spirit of His Dramas*. tr. James Loeb. NY: Macmillan Co., 1906.
- De Forest, Mary, ed. *Women's Power, Man's Game: Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honor of Joy K. King*. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1993.
- Desmond, Marilyn. "When Dido Reads Virgil: Gender and Intertextuality in Ovid's *Heroides* 7." *Helios* 20 (1993) 56-68.
- Dimock, George E. Introduction. *Iphigeneia at Aulis*. tr. W.S. Merwin and George E. Dimock, Jr. NY: Oxford UP, 1978. 3-21.
- Drabble, Margaret, ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- du Bois, Page. "Sappho and Helen." *Women in the Ancient World*. eds. J.P. Sullivan and J. Peradotto. Albany: SUNY Press, 1984. 95-105.
- Dyson, M. "Alcestis' Children and the Character of Admetus." *JHS* 108 (1988) 13-23.
- Faber, M.D. *Suicide and Greek Tragedy*. NY: Sphinx Press, 1970.
- Falkner, Thomas. "The Wrath of Alcmene: Gender, Authority, and Old Age in Euripides' *Children of Heracles*." *Old Age in Greek and Latin Literature*. eds. Judith de Luce and Thomas Falkner. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989. 114-31.

- Felman, Shoshana. "Turning the Screw of Interpretation." *Literature and Psychoanalysis*. ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982. 94-207
- Ferrari, G.R.F. *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's "Phaedrus."* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Foerster, Donald M. *The Fortunes of Epic Poetry: A Study in English and American Criticism, 1750-1950.* N.p.: Catholic University of America Press, 1962.
- Foley, Helene P. "The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama." *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*. ed. Helene P. Foley. NY: Gordon and Breach, 1981. 127-68.
- ". "Marriage and Sacrifice in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*." *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 159-80.
- ". *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides.* Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Fowler, R.L. "The Rhetoric of Desperation." *HSCPh* 91 (1987) 5-38.
- French, Marilyn. *The Women's Room* [1977]. NY: Ballantine Books, rpt. 1993.
- Froula, Christine. "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History." *Feminist Theory in Practice and Process*. eds. Micheline R. Malson, et al. Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1986. 139-62.
- Garland, Robert. *The Greek Way of Life.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Garner, Richard K. "Death and Victory in Euripides' *Alcestis*." *CA* 7 (1988) 58-71.
- Garrison, Elise P. "Attitudes toward Suicide in Ancient Greece." *TAPA* 121 (1991) 1-34.
- ". "Eurydice's Final Exit to Suicide in the *Antigone*." *CW* 82 (1989) 431-35.
- ". "Suicide Notes in Euripides' *Hippolytus*." *Text and Presentation*, vol. 9. ed. K. Hartigan. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989. 73-85.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn. *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*. [1857]. NY: E.P. Dutton, rpt. 1958.
- Gellie, George. "Hecuba and Tragedy." *Antichthon* 14 (1980) 30-44.

- Gilleland, Michael E. "Female Speech in Greek and Latin." *AJP* 101 (1980) 180-83.
- Gillespie, Stuart. *An Anthology of English Poets' Writings on the Classical Poets and Dramatists from Chaucer to the Present*. London and NY: Routledge, 1988.
- Gillis, Daniel. *Eros and Death in the "Aeneid."* Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1983.
- Gladstone, William Ewart. *Juventus Mundi: The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1869.
- Gold, Barbara K. "'But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place': Finding the Female in Roman Poetry." *Feminist Theory and the Classics*. eds. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin. NY and London: Routledge, 1993. 75-101.
- Goldsmith, Elizabeth C., ed. *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1989.
- Goodwin, Sarah Webster and Elisabeth Bronfen, eds. *Death and Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, forthcoming.
- Gould, John. "Law, Custom, and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens." *JHS* 100 (1980) 38-59.
- Greenhut, Deborah S. *Feminine Rhetorical Culture: Tudor Adaptations of Ovid's "Heroides."* NY: Peter Lang, 1988.
- Gregory, Justina. *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians*. Ann Arbor: U of MI Press, 1991.
- "Euripides Hecuba 54." *Phoenix* 46.3 (1992) 266-69.
- Griffin, Jasper. "Characterization in Euripides: *Hippolytus* and *Iphigeneia in Aulis*." *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*. ed. C. Pelling. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. 128-149.
- *Homer on Life and Death*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.
- Grisé, Yolande. *Le suicide dans la monde antique*. Montreal: Bellarmin, 1982.
- Gross, N.P. *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1985.
- Grube, G.M.A. *The Drama of Euripides*. London: Methuen and

- Co., Ltd, 1941.
- Haight, Elizabeth Hazelton. *Romance in the Latin Elegiac Poets*. NY: Longmans, Green and Co, 1932.
- Haley, Lucille. "Feminine Complex in the *Heroides*." *CJ* 20 (1924-25) 15-25.
- Hallett, Judith P. "The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-Cultural Feminism." *Women in the Ancient World*. eds. John Peradotto and J.P. Sullivan. Albany: SUNY Press, 1984. 241-62.
- Halperin, David, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin, eds. *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990.
- Harder, Ruth E. *Die Frauenrollen bei Euripides*. Stuttgart: Metzlersche and Poeschel, 1993.
- Harvey, Elizabeth D. "Ventriloquizing Sappho: Ovid, Donne, and the Erotics of the Feminine Voice." *Criticism* 31 (1989) 115-38.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. *Reinventing Womanhood*. NY: Norton, 1979.
- Hexter, Ralph J. *Ovid and Medieval Schooling: Studies in Medieval Commentaries on Ovid's "Ars Amatoria," "Epistulae ex Ponto," and "Epistulae Heroidum."* Munich: Arbo-Gesellschaft, 1986.
- Higham, T.F. "Ovid and Rhetoric." *Ovidiana: Recherches sur Ovide*. ed. N.I. Herescu. Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1958. 32-48.
- Hine, Daryl, tr. *Ovid's Heroines: A Verse Translation of the "Heroides."* New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1991.
- Isbell, Harold, tr. *Ovid: "Heroides."* London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Jacobson, Howard. *Ovid's "Heroides."* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974.
- Jensen, Katharine A. "Male Models of Female Epistolarity; or How to Write Like a Woman in Seventeenth-Century France." *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature*. ed. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1989. 25-45.
- Kakridis, Johannes T. *Homer Revisited*. Lund: Publications of the New Society of Letters, 1971.

- . "The Role of Woman in the *Iliad*." *Eranos* 54 (1956) 21-27.
- Kastely, James L. "Violence and Rhetoric in Euripides' *Hecuba*." *PMLA* 108 no. 5 (1993) 1036-49.
- Katz, Marilyn Arthur. "Sexuality and Body in Ancient Greece." *Metis* 4 (1989) 155-79.
- Kauffman, Linda S. *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.
- Kennedy, Duncan F. "The Epistolary Mode and the First of Ovid's *Heroides*." *CQ* 34 (1984) 413-22.
- Kenney, E.J. "Love and Legalism: Ovid, *Heroides* 20 and 21." *Arion* 9 (1970) 388-414.
- Keuls, Eva C. "The Feminist View of the Past: A Comment on the 'Decentering' of the Poems of Ovid." *Helios* 17 (1990) 221-24.
- King, Katherine C. "The Politics of Imitation: Euripides' *Hekabe* and the Homeric Achilles." *Arethusa* 18 (1985) 47-66.
- Kirchoff, A. *Euripidis Tragoediae*. Berlin, 1867-68.
- Knox, Bernard M. W. "Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulide* 1-163 (in that order)." *YCS* 22 (1972) 239-61.
- . "Second Thoughts in Greek Tragedy." *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1979. 231-49.
- Kovacs, David. *The Heroic Muse: Studies in the "Hippolytus" and "Hecuba" of Euripides*. *AJP Monographs in Classical Philology* 2. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1987.
- Lamberton, Robert. *Hesiod*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1988.
- Lawrence, Amy. *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press, 1991.
- Lawrence, S.E. "Iphigenia at Aulis: Characterization and Psychology in Euripides." *Ramus* 17.2 (1988) 91-109.
- Leach, Eleanor Winsor. *A Study in the Sources and Rhetoric of Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women" and Ovid's "Heroides"*. Diss. Yale U, 1963.

- Lefkowitz, Mary R. *Heroines and Hysterics*. London: Duckworth, 1981.
- . *Women in Greek Myth*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1986.
- Lesky, Albin. *Greek Tragedy*. tr. H.A. Frankfort. NY: Barnes and Noble, rpt. 1967.
- Lilja, Saara. *Dogs in Ancient Greek Poetry*. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1976.
- Lindsay, Jack. *Helen of Troy: Woman and Goddess*. London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1974.
- Lipking, Lawrence I. *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Lloyd, Michael. "Euripides' *Alcestis*." *G&R* 32 no.2 (1985) 119-31.
- Loroux, Nicole. "Sur le race des femmes et quelques-unes de ses tribus." *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 43-87.
- . *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*. tr. Anthony Forster. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1987.
- Lucas, F.L. *Euripides and His Influence*. NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923.
- Luck, Georg. *The Latin Love Elegy*. London: Methuen and Co., 1959.
- Luschnig, C.A.E. *Tragic Aporia: A Study of Euripides' "Iphigenia at Aulis"*. *Ramus Monographs* 3. Victoria: Aural Publications, 1988.
- Lyne, R.O.A.M. *The Latin Love Poets: From Catullus to Horace*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.
- Mack, Sarah. *Ovid*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1988.
- March, Jennifer. "Euripides the Misogynist?" *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality*. ed. Anton Powell. London and NY: Routledge, 1990. 32-75.
- Marsh, Terri. "The (Other) Maiden's Tale." *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. ed. Amy Richlin. NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. 269-84.
- Massé, Michelle A. *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1992.

- McConnell-Ginet, Sally. Address. "Gender, Power, and Meaning." New Haven, 21 March 1994
- McDonald, Marianne. "Iphigenia's *Philia*: Motivation in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*." *QUCC* 63 (1990) 69-84.
- McLean, John H. "The *Heraclidae* of Euripides." *AJP* 55 (1934) 197-224.
- Meridor, Ra'anana. "The Function of Polymestor's Crime in the *Hecuba* of Euripides." *Eranos* 81 (1983) 13-20.
- . "Hecuba's Revenge." *AJP* 99 (1978) 28-35.
- Michelini, Ann N. *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition*. Madison: U of WI Press, 1987.
- Michels, Agnes Kirsopp. "Death and Two Poets." *TAPA* 86 (1955) 160-179.
- Morgan, K. *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the "Amores"*. Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3 (1975) 6-18.
- Murnaghan, Sheila. "Body and Voice in Greek Tragedy." *Yale Journal of Criticism* 1.2 (spring 1988) 23-44.
- Myerowitz, Molly. *Ovid's Games of Love*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1985.
- Nagy, Gregory. "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rocks of Leukas." *HSCPh* 77 (1973) 137-77.
- Nancy, Claire. "φάρμακον σωτηρίας: Le mécanisme du sacrifice humain chez Euripide." *Théâtre et spectacle dans l'antiquité*. Leiden, 1983
- Nielsen, Rosemary M. "Alcestis: A Paradox in Dying." *Ramus* 5 no.2 (1976) 92-102.
- Norwood, Gilbert. *Greek Tragedy*. London: Methuen, 1920.
- Nugent, Georgia. "This Sex Which Is Not One: Deconstructing Ovid's Hermaphrodite." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2 (1990) 160-85.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- O'Connor-Visser, E.A.M.E. *Aspects of Human Sacrifice in the*

- Tragedies of Euripides.* Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner, 1987.
- O'Higgins, Dolores. "Above Rubies: Admetus' Perfect Wife." *Arethusa* 26 (1993) 77-97.
- Page, D.L. *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1934.
- Papanghelis, Theodore D. *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Pearson, Catherine S. "Simile and Imagery in Ovid *Heroides* 4 and 5." *Illinois Classical Studies* 5 (1980) 110-29.
- Perry, Walter Copland. *The Women of Homer.* NY: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1898.
- Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel.* New York: Harper and Row, 1961.
- Pope, Alexander. *The "Iliad" of Homer, vol. 2.* [1715]. London: F.J. Du Roveray, 1813.
- The Portuguese Letters.* tr. Donald Ericson. In Maria Isabel Barreno, et al. *The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters.* tr. Helen R. Lane. NY: Bantam, 1976. 403-29.
- Powell, Anton, ed. *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality.* London and NY: Routledge, 1990.
- Powers, Meredith A. *The Heroine in Western Literature: The Archetype and Her Reemergence in Modern Prose.* Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland and Co., Inc., 1991.
- Pozzi, Dora C. "Hero and Antagonist in the Last Scene of Euripides' *Heraclidae.*" *Helios* 20 no.1 (1993) 29-41.
- Pucci, Pietro. "Euripides: The Monument and the Sacrifice." *Arethusa* 10.1 (1977) 165-95.
- Quinn, Kenneth. *Latin Explorations.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.
- Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993.
- . "The Strategy of Inconsistency in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis.*" *CB* 59.2 (1983) 21-26.
- Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin and Amy Richlin, eds. *Feminist Theory and the Classics.* NY and London: Routledge, 1993.
- Radice, Betty. Introduction, *Propertius: The Poems.* tr. W.G. Shepherd. NY: Viking Penguin, 1985.

- Redfield, James. "Notes on the Greek Wedding." *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 181-201.
- Rehm, Rush. *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rites in Greek Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, forthcoming.
- Richlin, Amy. *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, Rev. ed. 1992.
- . "Invective against Women in Roman Satire." *Arethusa* 17 (1984) 67-80.
- , ed. *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.
- . "Reading Ovid's Rapes." in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. ed. Amy Richlin. NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. 158-79.
- Rogers, Katharine M. *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature*. Seattle and London: U of WA Press, 1966.
- Rosenmeyer, Patricia A. "The Epistolary Novel." *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*. eds. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. pp. 146-65.
- Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. "Alcestis: Character and Death." *The Masks of Tragedy: Essays on Six Greek Dramas*. Austin: U of TX Press, 1963. 201-48.
- Russell, D.A., tr. *On Sublimity*. By Longinus. *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations*. eds. D.A. Russell and M. Winterbottom. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972.
- Saylor, Charles. "Querelae: Propertius' Distinctive Technical Name for His Elegy." *Agon* 1 (1967) 142-49.
- Scafuro, Adele. "Discourses of Sexual Violation in Mythic Accounts and Dramatic Versions of 'The Girl's Tragedy'." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2 (1990) 126-59.
- Schlegel, Augustus William (sic). *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. [1809]. tr. John Black. Philadelphia: Hogan and Thompson, 1833.
- Schmitt, J. *Freiwilliger Opfertod bei Euripides*. Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1921.

- Seaford, Richard. "The Tragic Wedding." *JHS* 107 (1987) 106-30.
- Segal, Charles. "Cold Delight: Art, Death, and Transgression of Genre: Euripides' *Alcestis*." *The Scope of Words: In Honor of Albert S. Cook*. eds. P. Baker, S.W. Goodwin, and G. Handwerk. NY: Peter Lang, 1991. 211-28.
- . "Euripides' *Alcestis*: Female Death and Male Tears." *CA* 11 (1992) 142-58.
- . *Euripides and the Poetics of Sorrow: Art, Gender, and Commemoration in "Alcestis," "Hippolytus," and "Hecuba."* Durham and London: Duke UP, 1993.
- . "Golden Armor and Servile Robes: Heroism and Metamorphosis in *Hecuba* of Euripides." *AJP* 111 (1990) 304-317.
- . "The Problem of the Gods in Euripides' *Hecuba*." *MD* 22 (1989) 9-21.
- . "Violence and Dramatic Structure in Euripides' *Hecuba*." *Violence and Drama*. ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- . "Violence and the Other: Greek, Female, and Barbarian in Euripides' *Hecuba*." *TAPA* 120 (1990) 109-31.
- Seymour, Thomas Day. *Life in the Homeric Age*. NY: Biblo and Tannen, 1963.
- Sheppard, J.T. "Admetus, Verrall, and Professor Myres." *JHS* 39 (1919) 37-47.
- Shorey, Paul, tr. *Plato: Republic*. vol. 2. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1987.
- Showerman, Grant, tr. *Ovid: "Heroides" and "Amores."* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2nd ed. 1986.
- Siegel, Herbert. "Self-Delusion and the Volte-Face of Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*." *Hermes* 108 (1980) 300-21.
- Smith, Wesley D. "Iphigenia in Love." *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to B.M.W. Knox*. eds. Glen Bowerstock, et al. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979. 173-80.
- Snyder, Jane McIntosh. *The Woman and the Lyre: Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1989.

- Sorum, Christina Elliott. "Myth, Choice, and Meaning in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*." *AJP* 113.4 (1992) 527-42.
- Squire, Sir John, ed. *Selected Poems of Tennyson*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1947.
- Suzuki, Mihoko. *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1989.
- Syme, R. *History in Ovid*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978.
- Taplin, Oliver. *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the "Iliad"*. Oxford and NY: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Tarrant, R.J. "The Authenticity of the Letter of Sappho to Phaon (*Her.* 15)." *HSCP* 85 (1981) 133-53.
- "Two Notes on Ovid *Her.* 10." *RhM* 128 (1985) 72-75.
- Taylor, Henry and Robert A. Brooks, tr. *Euripides: The Children of Herakles*. NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981.
- Thalman, William G. "Euripides and Aeschylus: The Case of the *Hekabe*." *CA* 12 no.1 (1993) 126-59.
- Thompson, d'A.W. tr. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol.1. ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984.
- Thury, Eva M. "Euripides' *Alcestis* and the Athenian Generation Gap." *Arethusa* 21 (1988) 197-214.
- Trammell, Erna P. "The Mute *Alcestis*." *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Euripides' "Alcestis"*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968. 85-91.
- Trickett, Rachel. "The *Heroides* and the English Augustans." *Ovid Renewed*. ed. Charles Martindale. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. 191-204.
- van Hooff, A.J.L. *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity*. London and NY: Routledge, 1990.
- Vellacott, Philip. *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides' Method and Meaning*. London: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- Verducci, Florence. *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985.
- Vermeule, Emily. *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1979.

- Vernant, J.-P. "Feminine Figures of Death in Greece." *Diacritics* 16 (summer 1986) 54-64.
- . *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*. tr. Janet Lloyd. NY: Zone Books, rpt. 1990.
- Vessey, D.W.T. "Humor and Humanity in Ovid's *Heroides*." *Arethusa* 9.1 (1976) 91-110.
- . "Notes on Ovid, *Heroides* 9." *CQ* (1969) 349-61.
- Veyne, Paul. *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*. tr. David Pellaner. Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Walcot, P. "Greek Attitudes towards Women: The Mythological Evidence." *G&R* 31 (1984) 37-47.
- Walker, Charles R., tr. *Iphigenia at Aulis. Euripides*, vol 4. ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Way, Arthur S. tr. *Euripides*. vol. 1. NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1930.
- Webster, T.B.L. *The Tragedies of Euripides*. London: Methuen and Co., 1967.
- Weil, Simone. "The *Iliad* or The Poem of Force." [1940]. tr. Mary McCarthy. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1978.
- West, M.L. *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure, and Origins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- . *Immortal Helen: An Inaugural Lecture*. London: University of London, 1975.
- Whitman, Cedric. *Homer and the Homeric Tradition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1959.
- v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, U. "Excursion zu Euripides *Herakliden*." *Hermes* 17 (1882) 337-64.
- Wilkins, John. "The State and the Individual: Euripides' Plays of Voluntary Self-Sacrifice." *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality*. ed. Anton Powell. London and NY: Routledge, 1990. 177-94.
- . "The Young of Athens: Religion and Society in the *Heraclidae* of Euripides." *CQ* 40 (1990) 329-39.

- Wilkinson, L.P. *Ovid Surveyed*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1962.
- Williams, Gareth. "Ovid's Canace: Dramatic Irony in *Heroides* 11." *CQ* 42 (1992) 201-209.
- Williams, Gordon. *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: UC Press, 1978.
- . *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980.
- . *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Wilson, John R., ed. *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Euripides' "Alcestis"*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Winkler, John. *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. NY: Routledge, 1990.
- Wright, Frederick Adam. *Feminism in Greek Literature from Homer to Aristotle*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1923.
- Zeitlin, Froma. "Euripides' *Hekabe* and the Somatics of Dionysiac Drama." *Ramus* 20 (1991) 53-94.
- . "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama." *Representations* 11 (1985) 63-94.
- Zuntz, Günther. "Is the *Heraclidae* Mutilated?" *CQ* 41 (1947) 46-52.
- . *The Political Plays of Euripides*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1955.